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**THESIS CONTAINS
CD/DVD**

Folding and withholding: writing with and by choreographers

Abstract

The impetus for the present research comes from questions that arose in projects of collaborative writing by the author with British-based choreographers Rosemary Lee, Kim Brandstrup and Rosemary Butcher. In these projects, the three choreographers differently attempted to word elements of their ongoing choreographic enquiries. The conviction was that such writing might participate in a choreographer's current choreographic research, rather than document research that had already unfolded in the creation of a performance work.

The present research thus interrogates the philosophical implications of asking a choreographer for an account of how she or he works. With reference to recent studies in critical ethnography and ethics, the research proposes the development of practices of collaborative writing by a choreographer and a researcher-observer alert to the motivated and implicated positions of each. Included as appendix to the thesis is a book co-written with a choreographer and a CD-ROM of published collaborative writing and open interviews with Butcher, Brandstrup and Lee, performance documentation and journals of studio observation. Published instances of writing by other performance makers are additionally drawn into the enquiry as "research companions".

Interrogating relations between writing and choreographers' creation processes, the overall research premise thus concerns the development of writing capable of articulating what *matters* to choreographers. This research addresses those choreographers who have hesitated when asked about how they work, and asks every dance scholar to hesitate before writing *on or about* dance-making.

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Additional documentation of the performances and performance-making referred to in the co-authored writing has been included in the CD-ROM (and also on occasion reproduced in the body of the thesis). Furthermore, details of the choreographers' artistic biographies have been included in either the CD-ROM or in the Endnotes. Finally, the CD-ROM reproduces several published writings by other performance-makers which are referred to in the thesis as "research companions". Please access the CD-ROM as indicated at intervals in the body of the text. For ease of navigation, the CD-ROM is sectioned according to the chapters of the thesis. If the CD-ROM does not automatically start open *index.html* in the root directory of the CD-ROM with a web browser.

Contents of CD-ROM

1 Positioning (*no media*)

2 On 'Writing' and 'Reading'

'I am caught by seeing' (2005) Lee with Pollard

Research companion: 'Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema' (2003) Burrows & Ritsema

3 In Proximity

Lee's area of the ResCen website. Select from the left-hand menu to access the following:

- Lee's biography, artistic policy and choreochronicle
- 'The making of *Passage*' (2002) Lee and Pollard, design by Battista

- 'How to Hoard: writing field notes of rehearsals' (2004) Lee and Pollard
- 'Delving and doubled seeing: on a choreographer's practice' (2004) Lee and Pollard
- 'Forms of anticipation: a choreographer's notebook' (forthcoming 2006/7) Lee and Pollard
- Performance photographs of Lee's *Passage* and *Beached*
- Research companion*: 'Disinter/est: digging up our childhood' (2002) Sofaer & Sofaer Derevenski

4 On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'

- 'The instance before choice: a choreographer's practical speculations on time and perception' (2006/7 forthcoming) Brandstrup and Pollard
- Unpublished journal by Pollard on writing with Brandstrup
- Photographs of Brandstrup's company Arc Dance in rehearsal
- Research companion*: 'CVZVLC (Chicago – Vienna – Zagreb – Vienna – London/Chicago), 465 Sentences for June 2001, Goat Island Collaborative Journal Project'.

5 Collection and Change

- Butcher's creative CV
- 'Reflections on the making processes' (2005) Butcher, Pollard with Melrose
- Performance footage of Butcher's *Still-Slow-Divided* (2002) and *Fractured Landscapes, Fragmented Narratives* (1995-1997)

5 Concluding Remarks

- Photographs and images of postcards from Lee's *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2002)
- Unpublished interview, Lee in conversation with Pollard (2004)

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Dedicated to my family in thanks for their patient encouragement and for their care and love for my children during my studies.

Introduction

I feel in a terrible disadvantage (choreographer Jonathan Burrows in interview, Perazzo 2005:4-5)

[T]his essay is, in part, a defence of having nothing to say for oneself. (Riley 2000:1)

The present research undertaking enquires into what might be called a ‘worked’ interface, located between performance-making practices by (named) expert, professional artists, and the writing practices produced, at that site, and in looking back at it, by (and sometimes with) a researcher-writer. Relationality – between two or more practitioners – and difference – between, for example, a performance-making practitioner and a producer of writing – are central to the current project, which constitutes what might be called, despite some of the ongoing difficulties specific to the research model identified (I return to these below), an instance of practice as research in the performing arts. Although the present dissertation might appear to some readers to be *more or less* conventional, as far as thetic registers are concerned, it nonetheless is concerned with, and draws on material coming from, and returns consistently to, expert practices (as research – i.e. driven by a particular, ongoing enquiry) in the performing arts disciplines. It seeks, in addition, to explore the relatively recent emergence of what has been called ‘performance writing’, by undertaking it. In this sense, writing in apparently conventional thetic registers *itself* is viewed, in the present context, as a research practice /practice as research¹.

Evidence of the increasing acceptance of “practice as research” in dance and the performing arts in the UK can be found in the existence of research centres founded on this premise², on the growing list of successfully completed “practice as research” doctorates³, on an array of conferences, symposia and research projects investigating performance-making practices since 2000⁴, and the appointment of creative fellows in the performing arts by the UK research funding body, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)⁵. I note that the conditions for the appointment and funding of “artist researchers” are complex socio-political phenomena in modern universities and dance conservatoires (Jones 2003, Jackson 2004:112-3). This thesis,

however, is concerned rather with certain philosophical considerations that are to be addressed in the move to legitimate “practice as research”, where, by use of this term, I largely understand it to relate to *expert performance(-making) practices*, undertaken by expert practitioner-researchers, within the higher degree or research framework of the university (or HEI), where those expert practices, appropriately documented, figure as a major component within an ongoing research enquiry, pursued in terms of the sorts of criteria applied more conventionally to research in the Arts (in HEI context/s)⁶.

Now, continuing debates in Performing Arts departments as to the legitimacy of “practice as research” (noted for example by Pakes 2004), attests to a historically complex relation between artists and academia, a relation variously interpreted as “stalled” or “symbiotic” depending on a writer’s perspective⁷. In a recent study of the situation of performance in mainly US university arts and humanities departments, performance scholar Shannon Jackson noted a ‘link between scholars and artists [...] alternately disavowed and celebrated, touted and feared [...] in genre debates, in curricula, in artistic movements, in performance history itself’ (Jackson, 2004:3). Her writing examined, for instance, ‘the phenomenon of the “visiting artist”’ in US universities (which may have points of comparison to the situation in the UK), whereby US universities frequently became the sites and patrons (deliberately or otherwise) of mid-twentieth experimental performance. She analysed how US universities then implicitly claimed the authority to ‘constitut[e] the artist as a professional’ by the award of higher degrees (Jackson 2004:113). (In Britain, one of the first institutions to offer postgraduate study in dance was a professional dance training institution, the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, in the early 1980s.)

Performance writer and scholar Simon Jones (2003) has commented that under Labour leadership, post-1997, shifts in UK government funding of the arts have for a variety of reasons encouraged artists to make partnerships with educational institutions: ‘In effect,’ he observed, ‘this is eroding the once comfortably mutually exclusive boundaries between artists and academics; and more significantly, between those who make art professionally and those who do not’. His argument was that the erosion has created in Britain ‘the opportunity for performance studies to make the necessary paradigm shift to an activity predicated on *making* rather than *writing*’ by the appointment of ‘young academics emerging from practice-based doctoral work[...who] research and teach through practice [- and of] artists who are entirely at

home with submitting their practice to the reflective and critical discourses at work in the academy' (Jones 2003).

In the light of his analysis, however, Jones could not adequately respond to one question he himself raised: 'Why is the inclusion of artists still so problematic for the academy?' Shannon Jackson might have responded:

The attempt in so many theatre and performance departments to integrate the realm of the scholar-academic and the realm of artist-practitioner is, amongst other things, an attempt to reconcile historically different occupational structures. Consequently, the relation between theory and practice, between research and production, between scholarly and "non-scholarly" skills, requires a careful understanding of the very heavy institutional, industrial, cultural, and professional forces weighing in on such terms, on the institutional missions that they legitimate, and on the behaviours that they produce (Jackson 2004:22).

In the central sections of the dissertation, I propose to argue that under the influence of an emerging "practice-as-research" paradigm, it might seem to be the case that creative-practitioners could be invited to contribute creatively to, for example, a journal, through an acceptance of parity between certain modes of university writing and of professional performance-making as theoretical practices⁸. I note, however, the argument that scholarly interest in professional modes of art-making has not merely been under-theorised but historically marginalised:

Universities [...] are institutions committed, for the most part, to a particular epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry. (Schön 1983:vii)

Given such a marginalisation, as performance-theoretical writer Melrose (citing Rosenthal 1986 and Osborne 2000) points out, the pursuit of a practitioner-focused discourse, in the academy, that is not produced from the institutionally-validated subject-position of "researcher" might appear contradictory. On the one hand, there is a "literal language" used in artist's accounts of performance-making; 'for some theorists and scholars, this literal mode is philosophically uninteresting [...] or] almost unheard of to anyone who listened with deconstructionist ears' (Jackson 2004:109&112). On the other, publication of what appears "philosophically uninteresting" (at least according to readers trained in certain critical-analytical traditions) continues to take place, thereby seeming to point to a largely unstated conviction that an artist not trained in academia might nevertheless contribute something otherwise not written in critical-theoretical writing of performance. What might serve here as an introductory example of the "literal mode" is the following

extract from a 1998 interview by dancer, teacher and researcher Gill Clarke with choreographer Siobhan Davies:

Now the big problem that I felt we came across immediately was that if you dealt with a floor pattern, your body action became less interesting and if you dealt with a pattern through the body you never moved anywhere because your whole body was involved with making the pattern. (Davies in interview with Clarke 1998:55)

The “big problem” that the choreographer identifies does not readily equate to the concerns of spectator-theoretical writers - targeted as the latter are by Melrose; the one operates in performance-productive, future-oriented and multi-participant modes, the other in performance-reflective, single-authored, critical writing modes. When Siobhan Davies commented later in the same interview that ‘the whole point is that you’ve got to a place that you haven’t been in before’, a performance theorist might challenge the spatial metaphor without being able to account for the actioned, artistic judgments that her statement marked - and which the present research aims to approach in writing. Furthermore, Davies’ spatial metaphor may be, of itself, philosophically interesting as it arises quite specifically in artists’ own accounts of expert practice. Poet and scholar Denise Riley, reflecting on linguistic practices of self-presentation, speculated that a link might exist between ‘spatial and consequently temporal figures of speech, and the strains inherent in self-naming’ (Riley 2000:45):

Reprovingly ticking off metaphor is no good, and anyway metaphor will win. [...] It would be idle indeed to proscribe the intuition which [...] wants to declare that it really is the heart, that the heart does hurt, and that’s no metaphor. It does; but it is and it isn’t. (Riley 2000:48)

The research premises

In the light of these opening concerns, the present research writing is premised on the notion that the words of a professional creative practitioner, regardless of her or his academic expertise, may be of value to the academy by the fact that a choreographer’s standpoint in relation to knowledge-production in the arts is, otherwise, epistemically unavailable⁹. That is, as Melrose has consistently pointed out¹⁰, the models of intelligibility central to the ways a practitioner understands her work from within it, may otherwise be overlooked by those writing, instead, about its product. In this sense, a major impetus for the present research undertaking comes from the philosophical

questions arising from a series of projects of collaborative writing undertaken by the author with British-based choreographers Rosemary Lee, Kim Brandstrup and Rosemary Butcher, in which these choreographers differently word (or attempt to word) elements of their own ongoing choreographic enquiries – enquiries that are choreography-productive, rather than writing-productive. The conviction was that such writing might participate in a choreographer's current choreographic research, and focus on future work, rather than document research that had already unfolded in the creation of a performance work.

Interrogating relations between writing and choreographers' creation processes, the overall research premise thus concerns the development of writing capable of articulating what *matters* to choreographers – and the difficulties of such an endeavour. This research addresses those choreographers who have hesitated when asked about how they work, and asks every dance scholar to hesitate before writing *on* or *about* dance-making. A central concern of the thesis, however, as Butcher and Melrose point out, is that:

[W]e are asking the impossible here: that 'the visual artist' speak her practice – which, as choreographer/philosopher she has systematically preferred not to. (Melrose in Butcher et al. 2005:67)

Many of the concerns specific to the production and reception of a practitioner-focused writing, addressed in the present research project, have a bearing on institutional "practice-as-research" frameworks: indicative is the apparently widespread observation that a creative practitioner in that institutional framework may not look to a performance as a final epistemic output (Butcher and Melrose 2005:67)¹¹. Instead, something else, and something different will tend to be required. The individual choreographers alongside whose work this thesis has developed were creating work for public performance rather than engaging in a formal process of university-based knowledge production. Unlike those "artist-researchers" emerging from practice-based doctoral study, the choreographers with whom I have collaborated in the course of developing this thesis, had not at that time written formally within the university discourses of "practice as research" modes, nor, therefore, had they taken up its subject positions (notwithstanding that they hold senior posts in a university and one has been awarded an honorary doctorate). The measures of success that they work to are not, on the evidence of either my observations or the financing of their performance productions, those of a university or funded (and legitimised) by a research council

(although all have at times secured research funding from universities and research councils). They are amongst artists, then, whose wording of practice might be “unhearable” to academics.

Taking up a political stance, the present research thus interrogates the philosophical implications of asking a choreographer for an account of how she or he works. With reference to recent studies in critical ethnography and ethics, the research proposes, instead, the development of practices of collaborative writing by a choreographer and, as the present thesis will term it, a ‘researcher-observer’ alert to the motivated and implicated positions of each. Included as appendix to the thesis is a book co-written with a choreographer and a CD-ROM of published collaborative writing and open interviews with Butcher, Brandstrup and Lee, performance documentation and journals of studio observation. Published instances of writing by other performance makers are additionally drawn into the enquiry as what will be termed “research companions”.

A further political consideration follows from these opening observations: with the increasing institutional legitimacy of “artist-researchers” and continuing strength of the “scriptural economy” (the economy of writing, de Certeau 1984, Melrose 2005a), will the epistemic significance of choreographic practices not conceived as “practice-as-research” be overlooked? That is, might the perspective of artists who can articulate and thematise their practice according to university-privileged registers of writing become prioritised, such that the expert knowledge-practices of other artists are underestimated?

Outline of the thesis

In the first part of the thesis, entitled *Positioning: ‘Research’, ‘Practice’ and ‘Method’*, I attempt to set out, in a series of fragments, some of the aspects of this wide-ranging and relatively unstable study. This section gathers information and initial research findings that together allow me to position my own writer’s ‘voice’, and some of the activities accruing to it, in relation to the various sites and sources that the overall study visits.

The following part, entitled *On ‘Writing’ and ‘Reading’: Dance-Making Expertise and the Economy of Writing*, surveys a number of instances of the

performance and dance scholarship alongside which the present thesis is situated. It notes a continuing albeit relative inattention to the skills and practices of professional choreographers and an often implicit privileging, as Melrose points out in a number of publications, of spectator practices of interpretation of product. On *'Writing' and 'Reading'* acknowledges increasing research interest in the working processes of professional performance makers, but observes that the difficulties for pursuing this research – particularly in and though writing - have not been adequately marked in existing publications.

The next part, entitled *In Proximity: Studio Observation, Ethnography and the Open Interview* describes the development of the present enquiry through projects involving my co-writing with choreographers. It argues for a mode of collaborative writing between choreographer and researcher-observer, where the latter consistently negotiates what should remain a secondary position in the undertaking. An assessment is made, drawing on “practice theory” (Schatzki 1996) and anthropological models, as to the research significance of the author’s collaborative writing with choreographer Rosemary Lee. Two methodological issues are profiled, judged to provide useful models for the present chapter: firstly, approaches to interviewing derived from a number of disciplines (informed, for example, by consideration of an interview by Nick Kaye with Elizabeth LeCompte - a “research companion”, as explained in *Positioning*); and secondly, approaches to some of the ambiguities of observation and of the role of ‘researcher-observer’, when the observer is neither simply an “insider” nor an “outsider” in terms of her participation in the situation and activities observed. Approaches to the latter are informed by a number of issues raised in recent publications in critical anthropology, as to the possibility of producing what is variously termed auto, native or insider ethnography. The writing of *In Proximity* considers, in addition, the extent to which my own modes of studio observation might be informed by models of fieldwork practised in anthropology, on which basis certain aspects of the present research undertaking might be said to perform an “ethnographic turn” (Foster, H. 1996). Reference is made to the (‘practice’) writings of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, over the three final decades of the 20thC, and to the commentary on his work made by anthropologist Paul Rabinow. A “research companion” for this section of the thesis is identified in the “archaeological turn” of a paper written by Joshua Sofaer and his sister, the archaeologist Joshua Sofaer

Derevenski, whereby I finally raise the issue of ethical considerations when discussing collaborations with choreographers.

On 'Not (Yet) Knowing: Writing and an Ethics of Practice focuses in greater detail, and 'through practices', on ethical questions arising from observations of what seems to be a widely manifested reticence on the part of choreographers invited to make an account of his or her practice (prompting too an assessment of "reflective practice" (Schön 1983) models to the present research). I argue that the reticence of certain choreographers in the face of enquiry into their practices has been insufficiently considered by dance scholars. Drawing on the work of Yve Lomax and Alain Badiou, *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing* examines the ethical predicament for choreographers and for the researcher-observer of writing with respect to the changing, forward-oriented knowledge-situation of choreographic research through practice. This particular aspect of the present enquiry is developed with respect to reflections on a project of co-writing with choreographer and AHRC Research Fellow, Kim Brandstrup. The "research companion" for this section of the thesis is a collaborative journal produced wholly independently by the performance group Goat Island.

The final part, *Collection and Change: Writing 'Rosemary Butcher'; the Exemplary; the Collection*, starts from Badiou's observation in his *Ethics* that a concern with what is new, changing and singular (all characteristic of a professional choreographer's activity) is also necessarily ethical – arguably because the new tests established practices and 'received ideas', and requires ongoing negotiation between participants. Produced in/as fragments, *Collection and Change* reflects on my ongoing writing project with choreographer Rosemary Butcher, proposing a different conception of the activity of co-writing for researcher-observer and for the choreographer as *collecting*. This part of the thesis equally examines the consequences for the present researcher-observer that derive from Brian Massumi's call for an *ontogenetic*, rather than an ontological, account of changing events: the researcher-observer can plainly only observe *in its effects* what has been caused to happen in a dance rehearsal, however strong the urge might be to seem to fold effects back in order to try to derive causes from them. The "research companion" in the case of *Collection and Change* is not a piece of writing but a film made by Vong Phaophanit as part of one of Butcher's productions.

In the *Concluding Remarks*, I examine philosophical questions arising during a further project of writing with Rosemary Lee. My concluding argument, which takes up those established in the preceding sections, is that Lee's rehearsal workshops might be said to constitute, and to provide a model for, a Heideggerian¹² technology for choreographic production (Heidegger 1977, Knorr-Cetina 2001, Hunt and Melrose 2005). It is proposed furthermore that the series of projects I have undertaken with Lee be modelled in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's *rhizome* through movements of *de/reterritorialization* across dance-making and writing. Readers will be aware that the rhizome, in Deleuze and Guattari's account of it, provided, at the time of writing, a model selected quite specifically for its usefulness, as it is progressively unfolded, in suggesting the means to contest established, but inadequate models in the context of ongoing creative change.

On *Technē*

ISSUE EDITORS: RICHARD GOUGH & MICK WALLIS

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Fig. 1 Contents page from 10 (4) 2005 *Performance Research*, Taylor and Francis

Positioning: 'Research', 'Practice', and 'Method'

To lead by example?

One might well view the contents page of the December 2005 edition of *Performance Research* as indicative of certain then current research interests in dance and performance studies in so far as they concern UK universities and have been curated under the issue title, 'On *Technē*'¹³. I would suggest, in addition, that this particular edition of *Performance Research* may be taken not only as a manifestation of scholarly research in the fields of dance and performance but as both symptom and exemplar of certain tensions in the relationship of professional performance-making practices and professional scholarly writing practices in the early 21st century. This relationship has indeed been foregrounded by the journal's editors in their description of *Performance Research* as 'aim[ing] to promote a dynamic interchange between scholarship and practice in the expanding field of performance'¹⁴.

In the titles of the articles by Susan Kozel ('Revealing Practices': Heidegger's *technē* reinterpreted through performance in responsive systems') and Megan V. Nicely ('The Means Whereby: My body encountering choreography via Trisha Brown's *Locus*'), the references to "revealing practices", "through performance" and "my body" may be said to reflect how performing arts journals have since at least the mid 1990s given serious consideration to emerging trends in dance and performance studies research known at different times and different places as, for example, "practice as research", "practice by research" and "practice-based research"; marking, that is, 'an institutional acceptance of performance practices and processes as arenas in which knowledges might be opened' (Piccini 2002). Founded in 1995, *Performance Research*, by its name and editorial statement, announced an association with these trends.

The critical-theoretical academic writing by certain of the contributors to *Performance Research* may be understood to issue from 'situated cognition, inextricable from professional writers' procedural and social knowledge' (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995:13). However, several contributions announced on the contents page reproduced above are marked "artist pages" (Ewan Forster &

Christopher Heighes 'A Handbook of Theatrical Devices' and Daniel Watt 'Oblivion'). Pages contributed by artists have been included in *Performance Research* since its inception in 1996 and contribute, in the words of editor Ric Allsopp, to 'a contemporary archive of work that has specifically engaged with the page as site of performance' (Allsopp 2004:2). The "artist pages" of *Performance Research* frequently present writings and images by performance practitioners, who may or may not also identify aspects of their practices within university-disciplinary frames. (The 'Notes on Contributors' of the December 2005 issue however identify Watt in terms of research work on editing rather than performance-making, while contributors elsewhere in the issue are identified as performance practitioner-researchers but have not contributed "artist pages", a fact that may be taken as another marker of the increasing prevalence of a *practice as research* paradigm in performance studies). The question I want to raise here is of the situation and status of writing by professional creative performance-practitioners within a *peer-reviewed* journal such as *Performance Research* which produces its authority within critically-based university practices of knowledge-production and dissemination. How, and for whom, do artists write for *Performance Research*? Who are the peer-reviewers? Are the "artist pages" to be construed as published research (in a journal entitled after all 'Performance Research') within a formation of "practice as research"? Is such a move dependent upon the artists concerned having themselves taken up the subject position of creative practice-based researcher (Forster and Heighes, for example, do not appear to make or show their work within scholarly frameworks of "practice as research"¹⁵)? Could an artist enunciate this position within a university's "scriptural economy"¹⁶ without training and expertise in university preferred registers of formal writing? (I observe that Forster and Heighes studied theatre at Dartington College of Arts, while Watt holds a research post and an MA and D.Phil from the universities of Warwick and Sussex respectively.)

The editors of *Performance Research* have deliberately, it seems to me, foregrounded concepts of performance with respect to the "artist pages" but have been more circumspect of the questions raised by their publication in a scholarly journal as I have outlined above. The "artist pages" have been described by the editors, for example, as 'ways of representing an artist's performance work on the page' (MacDonald 1999:62) and situated in the light of 'contemporary art practices that invoke the page as a metaphorical and literal site of performance' (Allsopp and Mount, 2004:ii). That is, artists are invited to 'consider the page [...] as a site of performance

and/or its traces, or as a key to, or foundry of performance' but the artists' activity becomes perhaps a scholarly object which 'enabled us [*a category grammatically distinct from "artists"*] to reflect on the destabilisation and dislocation of the text in its relation to performance events' (Allsopp and Mount, 2004:iii). Editor Claire MacDonald (1999) offered the following explanation:

We wanted to create a category of works for paper which could include alternative commentaries, visual counterpoints, performance documents and pieces which, in any publishable format, used the page in provocative, performative ways and which could disregard the customary format and design constraints of critical essays. (MacDonald 1999:60)¹⁷

The aspiration to 'create a category of works for paper' marks an inventive engagement on the part of the editors of *Performance Research* to producing an interface of performance-making and page-making practices which, as argued in this thesis, is salient to the present research (focused on writing rather than page-making practices). However, where the editors of *Performance Research* are concerned in broad terms with 'representing an artist's performance work on the page', I will propose in the present thesis an interface of writing with performance-making conceived as an ongoing, extended engagement on the part of a practitioner, and of which performances are but one (albeit major) instantiation.

Under the influence of an emerging "practice-as-research" paradigm, it might be the case that creative-practitioners could be invited to contribute creatively to a journal through an acceptance of parity between certain modes of university writing and of professional performance-making as theoretical practices¹⁸. The "artist pages" might serve too as a legitimating narrative of self-belief for these journals: that of maintaining a proximity to contemporary performance-making¹⁹. MacDonald wrote in 1999, for example: 'Simply offering the page as a creative space to visual artists and poets keeps the dialogue with visual art and poetry alive outside the confines of critical work' (MacDonald 1999:62). Will the inclusion of writing in an academically oriented, peer-reviewed journal, in registers other than the critical-theoretical registers characteristic of university practices of knowledge-production shore up or destabilise models of knowledge which are dominant in the university?

Shifting Places?

My role and practices as what this thesis terms ‘researcher-observer’ have shifted in the course of the projects with the three choreographers from which the questions of this thesis have arisen. For example, my writing with Butcher began during the time at the end of the 1990s when I worked for her as a research assistant at the Laban Centre where she was then head of choreography. My work for Butcher then was not limited to the writing we produced together. As I remember it, our project of writing arose largely at my instigation, although with her vital encouragement, and predated my doctoral registration. On the other hand, when I subsequently began interviewing Rosemary Lee in 2001, she was already committed to the possibility in the near future of producing public reflections on how she choreographed through her role as a ResCen research associate at Middlesex University. We therefore explicitly evolved our projects of writing in the light of her research for ResCen and of my doctoral project. Our mode of working together has shifted over the course of the series of projects that I have been involved with her in, fed both by what I theorise in *In Proximity* as a reciprocal curiosity between choreographer and the role I term in the present thesis of ‘researcher-observer’ and by the changing nature of the projects (from observing rehearsals for a large group project to that of a trio, and from writing observations that post-dated performances to producing writing that is included in the performance (as discussed in the concluding remarks)). For more detailed reflections on my changing role in each of these collaborative projects of writing with a choreographer, please turn to the commentaries on each project contained in *In Proximity* (Lee), *On ‘Not (Yet) Knowing’* (Kim Brandstrup) and *Collection and Change* (Butcher).

The inventive multi-modal projects of co-authored writing of dance-making that I have worked on in the course of my wider project are included in the appendix; it was by engagement and reflection in these that the questions of this thesis were driven. (The inclusion of writing in the appendix in registers not necessarily those that are typically preferred in scholarly discourse may produce small interruptions in the processes of reading and interpretation promoted by a scholarly *habitus* (Bourdieu 1972, 1977:76-87, 1998:8)). As is discussed in *In Proximity*, the overall enquiry has sought an interface with choreographic practices whereby, for example, writing’s modes are provisional (because produced in relation to an ongoing choreographic enquiry); alert to the writers’ motivated positions and habits of judgement; tentative

(and often fragmentary, so as to acknowledge the multi-modal knowledge-complexity of rehearsal that will not be “captured” in our writing); and practitioner-driven, that is attentive to what matters to a practitioner.

The writing projects with choreographers were produced for publication elsewhere and are reproduced as appendix to the present thesis and are positioned by writing in the main body of the thesis that signals and reflects on their multiple existences as *partial objects* (Knorr Cetina 2001:183, and widely referenced by Melrose). These are partial objects, momentarily instantiated, for example, in terms of the overall research project, in terms of my ongoing collaboration with a choreographer, and in terms of the creative, philosophical enquiries of that choreographer (Butcher and Melrose 2005:67). In a comparable way, one might discern *partial objects* in the terms of the following description by Wayne McGregor of a collection of his choreographic notebooks:

side by side [my notebooks] start to describe process as a continuum of investigation where each piece seems to signify a marker in time rather than a completed and final destination [...] Ideas which are rejected in one piece are energetically excavated in another [...] In other words, there is a dynamic interplay between knowledge(s) of the past, with concepts of the future being researched within the boundaries of the present. (Delahunta et al 2004:68).

As he reads back and reflects on his notebooks, it would seem that McGregor perceives how each notebook both belongs to a particular choreographic project and instantiates elements of what he can also recognise to be an investigation that has a much longer duration.

A Note on the Researcher/Writer

I have begun to outline a configuration of dance and performance scholarship within which to introduce and situate my doctoral enquiry. As a researcher, my approach was initially informed by undergraduate studies in English Literature and Masters level studies in Dance. The immediate impetus for the research however came from watching choreographers at work and in my subsequent conversations with them²⁰. At the core of this thesis is a concern with choreographic processes and with the attempt, especially by a choreographer, to observe and write of them. Formal discourses of dance scholarship do not readily engage with the processes and concerns of contemporary dance-making as I have observed or heard of them from choreographers, a discrepancy which motivated the present enquiry (Melrose 2002d, 2005b. For extended discussion, see *On ‘Writing’ and ‘Reading’*)

I recognise that my research concern with observing choreographers at work and with the accounts they give of their practice is inextricable from my future role as spectator of the performances towards which the choreographers are working with dancers and technical teams. In praxiological terms, therefore, this thesis contains not only extensive multi-moded documentation of choreographers' studio practices but of their dance-works, for example, as photographs reproduced in the body of the thesis and in performance footage included on the appendix CD-ROM. What is more, the research significance of this thesis is entirely contingent upon these prior choreographic processes (even though the same or similar processes are likely also to inform new work by the artists concerned). The inclusion of performance photographs and video documentation in the present research participates then in the same conviction that Melrose described in the quotation below, when introducing the proceedings of a conference:

[T]he visuals inserted in or juxtaposed against the written materials are rather more than illustrative: they extend the research enquiry, suggesting, however badly, that research activity in the arts at least, in terms of pragmatics, is always relational. It has a context (or contexts), a situation (or situations), an institutional setup (or setups), present Actors in dialogue, whose present activity is ghosted by the traces of other work; and it tends to have an audience (or audiences), for whom 'the work' will in fact be non-identical with what the researchers themselves continue to find 'in it'. (Melrose 2003-4)

This thesis begins, thus, with reflections on a web project conceived in collaboration with the British choreographer Rosemary Lee (for readers unfamiliar with Lee's work, the accompanying CD-ROM contains a web choreochronicle and biography²¹); this project represents one instance of the mode of collaboration between researcher and choreographer that the present research proposes (Lee with Pollard 2005). For this website, a video clip from one of Lee's rehearsals was reproduced, accompanied by a series of voiceover in which Lee reflected on what she might have been seeing or thinking during this micro-moment in the making of a dance work. The reader is advised to access the website (Appendix CD-ROM, *Positioning*) before continuing.

In selecting such a starting point, I wish to acknowledge the individual practices (signalled here by photographs and video footage) of the three choreographers with whom I collaborated in this research – Rosemary Lee, Rosemary Butcher and Kim Brandstrup. The web project with Lee reflected on below is a particularly apt starting point for my developing argument since these webpages were

in part intended to showcase documentary footage of Lee's rehearsals, made by filmmaker Peter Anderson. The arguments of this thesis are contingent upon and secondary to these choreographers' creative work and I thank them for their fundamental contribution of support, interest and time in developing the collaborative practitioner-focused writing proposed and theorised by this thesis. It may be noted that each chapter of this thesis which refers by name to the practices of a choreographer with whom I have collaborated has been forwarded to the choreographer concerned inviting his or her feedback and requesting permission to include it within the present thesis.

I use the reflections on the web project with Lee to introduce my overall enquiry since it also evidences my own participation in the studio as 'researcher-observer' in some of Lee's rehearsal (in the rehearsal clip, I can be seen indistinctly sitting near Lee). I remember watching this moment in a rehearsal workshop. Even as Lee described above, I have found myself intensely absorbed and moved by watching dancers who are focused on an activity in the studio. The present enquiry is in fact driven by my interest and absorption, which is also undoubtedly key to my ongoing collaboration with Lee. My reflections in this thesis on the collaborative web project with Lee are exemplary then of how I sought to focus on processes of studio-based dance-making, rather than to investigate my engagement as spectator in professional performance outputs. I came to this research focus from my background as a semi-professional dancer who had had the opportunity to watch experienced professional dancers at work with choreographers. (I began to watch Rosemary Butcher's rehearsals, for example, after participating in a summer intensive at London's Laban Centre in the late 1990s.)

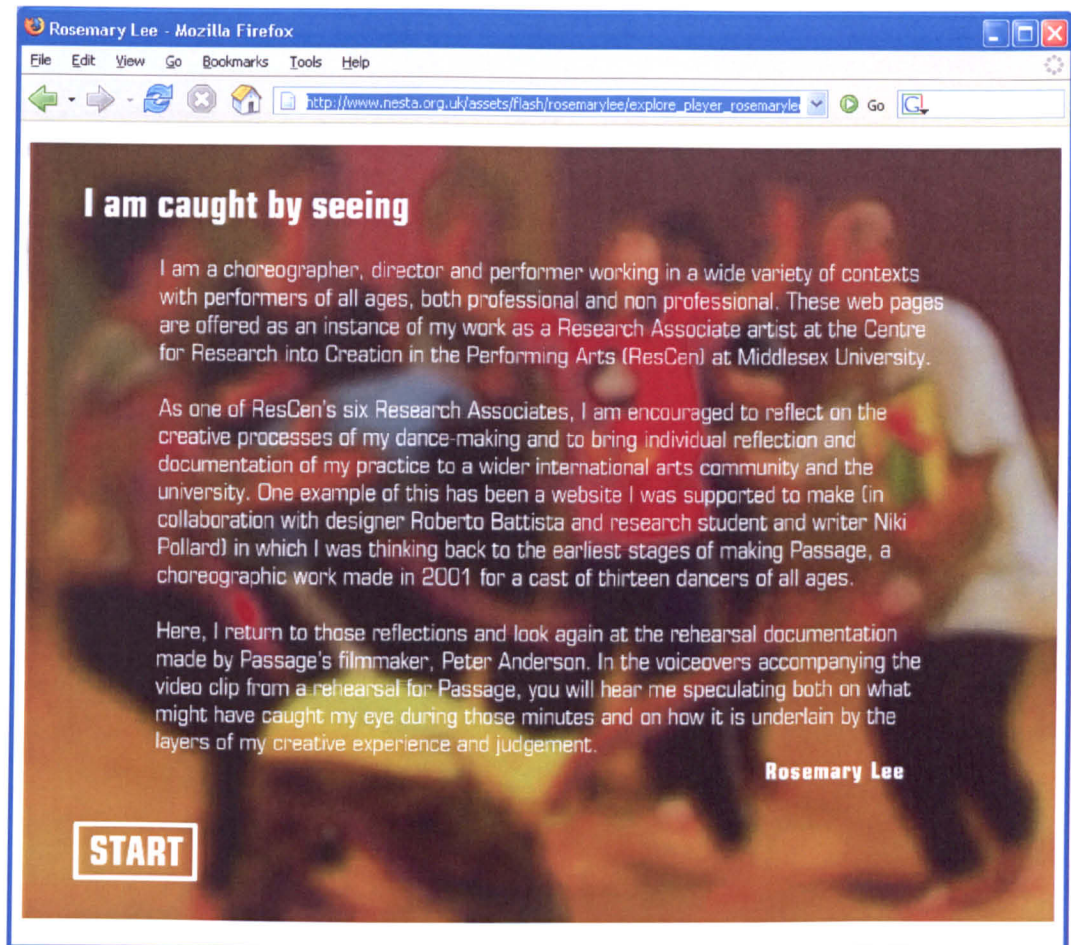


Fig. 2 Home page from website, "I am caught by seeing" Rosemary Lee with Niki Pollard (2005), interaction design by ActionTimeVision and The Brew, and documentary footage by Peter Anderson.

http://www.nesta.org.uk/assets/flash/rosemarylee/explore_player_rosemarylee.html

The Exemplar²²:

“I am caught by seeing” (on Appendix CD-ROM)

Rosemary Lee was invited by NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, UK) and ResCen (Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts at Middlesex University) to create for the NESTA website an instance of how ResCen enabled her in her role as a Research Associate artist, to reflect on the creative processes of her dance-making and to bring these reflections to a wider international arts community and the university. Lee asked me to work with her on this project in which she looked back at rehearsal documentation of *Passage* (2001) a choreographic work she had made for a cast of thirteen dancers of all ages. *Passage* included film by Peter Anderson who also created the rehearsal documentation footage.

On the website we created, with interaction design by ActionTimeVision and The Brew, one short clip of rehearsal footage may be viewed accompanied by a series of different voiceovers in which Lee reflected on how she might have seen that moment during rehearsal, both in terms of immediate perceptual experience (how “my eye is caught by seeing” as the project was entitled) and of her existing knowledges, aesthetic preferences, working habits, and modes of judgment triggered by watching. In that rehearsal, Lee had given the two smallest children of the group the task of moving suddenly from a “neutral state” of standing quietly, into an extreme shape and movement that they had earlier devised earlier and named in *Passage* “display” (for images and discussion, see Lee and Pollard 2002, 2004, 2006). The website’s footage shows the children standing initially facing Lee, and then later in the task, in response to Lee’s instruction, turning to face one another. The other performers (older children and adults) work together in two groups, each responding to one child. When a child moves from standing to “display”, the group nearest dashes forwards, helps the child back to standing, and then smoothly returns to the furthest corners of the room. The footage shows the group working through this activity several times accompanied by music from John Luther Adams’ *Earth and the Great Weather* which was the soundtrack for *Passage*.

In each voiceover for the website, Lee describes different elements of what she notices as choreographer in the footage, observations that she links to aims and concerns she had during the making of this performance work. The premise was to speculate on what Lee might have been seeing, thinking, feeling and how she was relating to the dancers during that moment of rehearsal. For example, Lee might be voicing what she notices in watching the footage, sharing with the web-user that “I am seeing [...] now I am caught by seeing [...]”, but her observations are oriented to what she may have been noticing when she was present in that live moment in the studio; the stances of the two young children settling and preparing themselves for the task, the suddenness with which the girl takes up her “display” stance, or the tenderness of an older boy that stands out for Lee when a group rushes to a child. In another voiceover, Lee observes detailed qualities to the dancers’ hand movements that draw her eye as she watches the video clip, but which she speculates she might not have been aware of in the studio. In a third voiceover she described what might have been her reasons for setting up this task and what she might have been trying to achieve with the activity (which was not retained in the performance in this form). A fourth voiceover had a different focus again, this time on the affective states she was enabled to thematise by the children’s movement, and on contradictory qualities of what she takes to be vulnerability and power in both their movement and in their interaction with the group of older dancers.

Lee and I discussed how the website might reveal to a web-user something of Lee’s perspective as a dance-maker, particularly in terms of the multiple frames of attention with which Lee had observed she might simultaneously be working in any single moment of rehearsal. Overlaps exist between some of the voiceovers, marking layered connections as well as contrasts; the plurality of the voiceovers indicates the inadequacy of any single account that she might have produced if an observer had questioned her during rehearsal. Later in the thesis, I discuss a piece of collaborative writing which indicates shifts across weeks or months in a choreographer’s sense of her creative concern in a particular process of dance-making (*Collection and Change*, discussing Butcher et al 2005). Lee’s voiceovers are focused at the opposite scale and track the minutiae in her sense of her choreographic concerns in even a single moment of rehearsal.

In their multiplicity and overlaps, Lee’s voiceovers might be conceived of in terms of Gilles Deleuze’s description of “the multiple” as not only what ‘has many

parts but also what is folded in many ways' (Deleuze 1993, 2003:3). Lee has commented to me on creative doubts she experiences about repeatedly returning to certain elements in her work; equally, however, she feels affirmed if she recognises a relation between her recurrent creative concerns and images with a long cultural history (see *In Proximity*). It seems to me that Deleuze's description might be affirming for Lee of her decision to return to creative concerns since, by Deleuze's account, the work is not "the same" or using "old themes" (implicitly of less value in performance-professional terms by being not "original" or "new") but is, rather, 'folded in many ways'. A spectating-interpretative account might unravel Lee's approach through an analysis of recurrent themes by one or more interpretative frameworks. A practice-focused enquiry into her creative process, however, might be attentive to how a *fold* (by which I might understand an overlap or *connection* in her concerns, Lee & Pollard 2004) 'is always folded within a fold. Unfolding is thus not the contrary of folding, but follows the fold up to the following fold' (Deleuze 1993, 2003:6). Drawing notionally²³ on Deleuze's philosophical description, here, I suggest that I might develop writing with choreographers that seeks to "unfold" their creative practice, such that it might be in some sense "written (of)", but that this unfolding does not aim synoptically to analyse and categorise a choreographer's modes of working. Rather it 'follows the fold up to the following fold', following and elaborating an enquiry, such that it continues to unfold - that is, without breaking open or dissecting and thereby seeming to resolve "the multiple" of an individual's creative practice. A conception of the relation of scholarly (writing) enquiry to a choreographer's practice as a metaphoric following of folds will permit me too to reflect on how over the course of collaborating on reflective writing with Lee, premised on her existing commitment to reflection (in part marked and facilitated by her role as ResCen artist-researcher), further folds have been identified or produced between what is creative and what is reflective, between a writing enquiry into choreographic practices and a creative, productive engagement in choreographing.

Lee and I sought to offer a web-user a highly detailed glimpse of Lee's concerns when she watches dancers in the studio. In our previous collaborations together (discussed in *In Proximity* and the concluding remarks) we had observed the difficulty of producing reflections that at a micro-level referred to the particulars of a choreographic process. The project '*I am caught by seeing*' was conceived as an attempt at a detailed "unfolding" of Lee's perceptions, preoccupations and

observations - that is towards her knowledge - as a practitioner. Through voiceover, our intention was that Lee's reflections could be linked indexically to an observed moment of rehearsal (so far as it had been video documented).

Lee has written and spoken of her continuing fascination and pleasure in watching dancers 'in the process of grappling with a task, in the moment of that engagement' (from a postcard circulated amongst the audience during Lee's *Suchness*, 2002 and 2005-6, see *Concluding Remarks*). '*I am caught by seeing*', like *Suchness*, is a project in which she has attempted to share her absorption with audiences (and scholars). Lee's frequent mention of individual dancers visible in the rehearsal clip emphasises too that choreographing is a relational process (choreographer- and dancer-specific) that is contingent on prior casting decisions.

'*I am caught by seeing*' was commissioned to serve as an example of ResCen's work as a NESTA awardee by the work of Lee as artist-researcher. An ethical predicament of the present research thence arises since my overall research aims may not be consistent with those of ResCen despite the fact that I have at times been contracted by ResCen to produce research collaboratively with its artist-researchers (and my proposal for the present research was conceived whilst I was employed by ResCen as a research assistant and administrator). My research project and orientation seem to be aligned to ResCen's overall project when they describe that 'in terms of practice-as-research' ResCen 'is principally concerned with processes in art making, rather than with the outcomes (the more usual focus of, for example, performance studies in the university sector)' (www.rescen.net, accessed 30/6/06). However, I would not describe my research, as ResCen does, as seeking 'to identify commonalities in the making processes across established disciplines' (www.rescen.net, accessed 30/6/06).

Lee and I conceived and created the webpages collaboratively. By some accident, the credits page (marking our collaboration, the work of the *Passage* dancers and artistic team, and support for the project by, for example, my AHRC award for doctoral study) was not included when the pages appeared on the NESTA website. The present research undertaking is in part motivated by my conviction that the significance in scholarly terms of performance-makers' knowledge of their creative practice has been undervalued. Consistently, therefore, I have aimed, as this chapter has argued, to privilege the position and voice of performance practitioners in the

present research. The accidental omission of a credits page for *'I am caught by seeing'* might be said to be symbolic of the ethical and practical complexities of authorship for a project of research that enquires into performance-makers' knowledges and ways of knowing and doing. As I proceed to signal throughout this thesis, the obstacles against someone in the role, as this thesis describes, of researcher-observer, pursuing such an enquiry are significant. The intervention I offered Lee through my studio observation, questions, writing and editing might be said to have supported and facilitated her in reflecting on her knowledge as a practitioner. The NESTA website should not, I would argue, be seen as co-authored (although our other projects more evidently have been). What then was the status of my contribution? Without my intervention, would Lee have articulated observations of her practice of a similar order? Does the expertise of her dance-making as knowledge-practice risk scholarly disregard if she does not articulate and thematise her practice according to university-privileged registers of writing (as certain of our projects together have elsewhere)?

Research Questions arising from 'I am caught by seeing'

The *'I am caught by seeing'* project is exemplary of the collaborative writing projects through which the questions of the present research evolved: it arose from a sustained collaboration with a choreographer, and from a research process that involved on my part a research stance that might be affirmative of the choreographer, drawing, in terms of method, on open interview and studio observation, and it incorporates an aspiration to "omni-attentive", time-sensitive observations of practice (discussed in *In Proximity*). Key questions of the present research concern *how* to write of arts practices whose practitioners may not formulate their operative modes discursively; with *who* can write (in ethical as well as writerly terms); and with the appropriate writerly registers: that is, with how, and for what readers, an action-based economy of dance-making is approached through a writerly one. Lee and I anticipated that web-users of *'I am caught by seeing'* might include but are not presumed to be dance specialists, either as scholars or practitioners. In the voiceovers, Lee speaks reflectively but without using dance technical registers. A website such as *'I am caught by seeing'* then also raises questions significant to the present research as to the relation or value of a practitioner's reflections for a scholarly enquiry into dance-making.

A point of departure for my enquiry is the assertion of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1972) that an unreflective observing standpoint constitutes practical activity as spectacle, leading a researcher to ‘insist on trying to answer questions which are not and cannot be questions for practice’. Correspondingly his or her “theoretical” (i.e. “non-practical”) disposition [...invites] a quasi-theoretical attitude’ from practitioners that tacitly excludes reference to tactical operations (Bourdieu 1972, 1977:107 and 1998:130-132). In his writings, Bourdieu has expressed frequent reservations of this kind about practitioners’ accounts of their practices (Bourdieu 1972, 1977:107). The present thesis argues however for my conviction as a researcher-observer that Lee’s accounts of *Passage* in the website voiceovers should not be condemned in Bourdieu’s phrase as “theoretical” (i.e. “non-practical”) notwithstanding that Lee can no longer speak directly from the “practical disposition” with which she was then working in the studio.

I do not, however, wish to underestimate the complex shifts of position, of which Bourdieu was an astute observer, which occur when a practitioner is invited to reflect on her or his practice. One such shift became evident to me only at a late stage in my research when I received Lee’s responses to a draft of *In Proximity* which is concerned with a more ambitious website in which we also reflected on the making of *Passage*. I cite from Lee’s responses which reveal nuance and negotiation in how she presents herself and her practice that has implications for the present research:

[...] were you ever to publish [*In Proximity*] more publicly would I be able to look at that chapter a little more and make changes? [...] I come across as a bit unknowing or sort of slightly helpless to my past or imaginings[...] I actually think that’s correct to some extent but it then somehow makes me a subject in a public arena, that I become analysed and looked at and I remain silent. I think sometimes I present myself as a doubter [...] at other times I feel clear, assured, certain and secretly knowing. (Lee, June 2006, from an unpublished email to the author, reprinted with permission, revised by Lee)

Lee’s response suggests that she was recognising a pattern to her self-presentation by how it was reflected in my draft chapter. If correct, this encounter could provide evidence of one way that the present research has supported a choreographer’s articulation and understanding of her creative practice. In Lee’s wording, I am reminded of a rueful observation by poet and scholar Denise Riley that:

How someone will speak about herself is deeply and immediately historical.
To overhear one’s self, though, is to witness it singing an aria, the evaluation

of which demands the hardest criticism and a knowledge of every rhetorical trick in the book. (Riley 2000:30)

Lee's response to my draft chapter suggests a reticence in the face of my scholarly enquiry into her practice (but which is different from that examined in *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'*). Her concern that she might be represented as "unknowing" in a piece of academic writing would seem to signal some of the ethical difficulties of the present research project, given a paucity of scholarly attention to performance-making practices (argued in *On 'Writing' and 'Reading'*) and the knowledge-political implications of any writing by a researcher "of" a performance-maker's practice. In her response, Lee gives what I take to be considerable insight into what she perceives as her doubled affective stance: experiencing herself strategically in dance-making contexts as a "doubter" in order to orient herself to unexpected, unplanned-for moments in the studio, but simultaneously limiting the extent to which she experiences doubt so as not to jeopardise what for her is a necessary and productive conviction that she can succeed.

If the dialogue-based enquiries that Lee and I followed together into her creative processes were to succeed in being practice-focused, rather than spectating-based, then one indicator of this may be that, in retrospect, Lee perceived my writing as representing her as too doubtful and unknowing since "doubting" is, as she has described, connected with her practice by the fact that it is an instrumental element of her affective, creative engagement. An ethical problem arises, then, in the present research project, in that it aims at a practice and practitioner-focused writing of dance-making, yet Lee has commented that she is uneasy about being represented in this way.

By contrast, Lee's manner in the voiceovers of *'I am caught by seeing'* may be characterised as seeming assured and certain of her sense of what she is seeing on the video and of what would have drawn her eye when she was present in the live moment of that rehearsal. *'I am caught by seeing'* is focused on Lee's practice, but may perhaps not be oriented to her practitioner-based knowledge. In the voiceovers she speaks as if a participant-observer, speaking "for" the past self visible in the video footage. Lee's voiceovers, it seems to me, are reflective of her practice as when she might speak at a student seminar or to audiences about her work. However, her mode of speech is not auto-reflexive in ways that it may have been at times during our private conversations on her practice. My conviction then is that, during our conversations, the ways she spoke reflectively of her creative practice also in part exemplified some of the modes

of her engagement by which she in fact works when imagining and creating a dance work (c.f. Derrida 1985). It seems to me then that to reflect profoundly on how she works, she adopted a “supple”, responsive, “open” quality of engagement which she might use in the studio. However, this engagement became configured in my writing, Lee sensed, as ‘unknowing [...] slightly helpless to my past or imaginings’ (Lee, email to the author, June 2006).

The present observations may be taken as one instance of the difficulties facing attempts to focus on a choreographer’s own perspective on his or her processes of dance-making. The distinctiveness of the present research lies in how it theorises the situation of a choreographer who seeks to articulate aspects of his or her enquiries, engagement and practices even as they continue to unfold. Other projects are concerned with producing professional practitioners’ accounts of their art-making (notably, for example, ResCen, to which Lee presently belongs, and for which both I and Melrose have previously worked). The present research is distinctive however by its investigation of the specific knowledge difficulties which face the attempt to write of ongoing choreographic enquiry and production from the perspective of choreographer.

It may be not unsurprising that much published writing to date is arguably unable to articulate how choreographers ‘theorise through complex action [...] without necessary recourse to explanatory text-production’ (Melrose 2002d). The present thesis is crucially concerned, in these sorts of terms, with the particular philosophical difficulties that face a performance-maker (difficulties which remain largely unacknowledged in dance and performance scholarship) in seeking to articulate her or his knowledge of performance-making as an actional, future-oriented process (and in the absence of that process, other than as partially traced in for example memory, video documentation or notebooks).

I was driven to carry out the present enquiry by my curiosity as to the contrast I frequently observed between the ways choreographers articulated in public their approaches to choreography (as commented above, for example, of Lee) either in published writing or in person (for example, in symposia, workshops or “after-show” talks), and the ways that in private, informal conversations I heard them reflect on how they were working on a forthcoming production.

The present research is intended for those with a scholarly interest in how one might write *of*, *about* or *on* processes of choreography. More particularly, it addresses dance and performance scholars (who may themselves be practitioners) who might ask a choreographer (or question themselves) for an account of how they make their work. The research also seeks to interest choreographers who plan to produce a self-account of their performance-making or who may have observed themselves hesitate when questioned about their work.

The Question of Research Models

I thought it worth risking some confusion in order to – as my friend Jed Rasula put it – “aerate the academic text” while making explicit the different serious registers (analytic, poetic, subjective, objective, descriptive, meditative, evocative, etc.) of thinking. We operate on many levels, waking and dreaming, as we make our way through a topic; but then we foreshorten the whole process in the service of a consistent, conclusive, voice or genre. I wanted to resist that a bit. (James Clifford, 2000:71)

The present thesis, as noted earlier, constitutes one fold of a wider project that is concerned with the development of writing with or by choreographers (or more generally, focused on the perspective of a choreographer). While there has been considerable research interest in interfaces of performance and page (as observed in the Introduction), the present research is concerned with possible interfaces of performance-*making* and writing practices. The thesis addresses certain questions arising from practical projects of writing with choreographers. It might appear that writing with or by choreographers will operate only as illustration of the theoretical arguments made in this thesis (and indeed, such writing is provided as Appendix). However, the writing of the thesis has been driven, as have my collaborations with choreographers, both by enquiry/critical reflection and practically, through those projects of developing writing practices in relation to performance-making. The authority assumed by critical-theoretical modes of writing has been privileged by the thetic apparatus used here, but this entails a move that is problematic, firstly in terms of the importance of artists’ singular (and signature²⁴) practices for professional success, and secondly in terms of my arguments concerning the development of choreographer-focused writing through affirmative, immersive, qualitatively transforming modes of practical engagement.

The still-evolving practices of writing with choreographers that I interrogate in this thesis have been developing in elaborative rather than confrontational, deconstructive or dispersive terms (Spinoso 2001:200, also cited in Melrose 2003). The research questions of the present study were, for example, emergent: that is, they were not determined in advance of the research activities, but became formalized incrementally during the course of projects of writing with choreographers. They developed, for example, through an engagement with difficulties encountered and

reflective evaluation, through feedback, a process of unfolding, returning and re-considering.

As an emergent theoretical project, my research approach might have been defended by adopting strategies and models of self-reflective practitioner research from the social sciences, such as “reflective practice” (discussed in *In Proximity*) and “Action Research”²⁵, which are characteristically employed in complex, unrepeatable situations like that of a rehearsal studio; and they may be (as my wider project aims) practitioner-driven, involving collaborations between researchers and practitioners, and focused on practitioners’ understandings. However, the instrumental ends aimed at by these modes of practitioner research will tend to contrast markedly with those of the present enquiry (Carr and Kemmis 1986:162 cited Smith 1996, 2001). Other researchers and writers in arts and humanities disciplines have, in turn, expressed reservations as to the value of, for example, certain Action Research-based approaches to practitioner-focused research into art-making. Researcher Neil Brown has observed that, where its methods are employed in art and design research, Action Research ‘devotes little time to aspects of practice that it sees as inefficient or irrelevant to its particular project. It imposes technical goals on institutional practice that are more likely to conceal the complexities, irrationalities and absurdities that social researchers, such as Rom Harré(1983) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990) see as critical to practical reasoning (Brown 2004)’.

Were I to adopt a framing of reflective or action research, the choreographic subjects of this thesis, either persons or processes, would tend to be objectified within sociological discourse. It nonetheless remains the case, however, that whenever I identify “the choreographer” as the subject of a clause, the textual logic is already one that objectifies. As Melrose has argued, to identify such a subject is to ‘disrupt the relational specificity of “what is going on”’; the synoptic nominalizations thereby produced (through the naming - hence the fixing - of a subject and the neat predication of that name in clause-making) work against every attempt to represent process, even where process is given as the preferred focus (Melrose 2002b, 2002d, 2003a). Aware of this synoptic force, I have aimed in the present research to be reflexively alert to the ethical and political implications of the writing practices I have developed. I have included extensive visual documentation of choreographic practices, including the rehearsal, in the attempt to present differently the work of choreographers with whom I have collaborated.

One might want to argue that a degree of unease is common to whosoever produces a reflexive account of their research in a formal register. In the late 1980s, Gregory Ulmer cited the work of Paul Feyerabend (1975) on scientific practices and the impact on experimental outcomes of contingent factors such as resourcing or a researcher's inventiveness, which were not conventionally recounted or formally identified in the experimental 'write-up' (Ulmer 1989:29-32). Reflection on a researcher's practical engagement is, in such a discursive economy, only required, in and by academic writing, to evidence limitations with regard to the status of data presented and the validity of results. The limitations and impositions of the scriptural economy have been challenged by increasing numbers of researchers in a post-structural climate, characterised by the historically-specific tendency (manifested across a range of disciplines) to dismantle claims to objective authority: these have correspondingly brought pressure to bear with regard to ethical reflexive research practices.

In traditionally hierarchical models of thesis writing, the "results" obtained from practical engagement operate in terms of illustration and proof and are then superseded by theoretical conclusions drawn. The thetic apparatus - survey of a field of knowledge, disengaged reflection on data - is itself, as Susan Melrose has pointed out (citing Rosenthal 1986), informed by the presuppositions of spectator-based theories of knowledge (Melrose 2005a, 2005c). The present research undertaking aims, in epistemological terms, to observe the limitations of such theories of knowledge where practitioner-focused research is concerned, and attempts, at the same time, to *perform* an ethical engagement with regard to the knowledge-practices specific to individual choreographers' compositional processes. On this sort of basis, the present research project needs to interrogate other dominant practices, particularly the formal, focused, 'academic' registers of writing. As systemic-functional linguist M.A.K. Halliday has observed of writing in the 1980s, formal, scientific registers of writing, unlike colloquial speech, linguistically represent - and effectively bring into being - 'a world of things, rather than one of happening' (Halliday 1987:146). Such writing's modes then are unlikely to articulate contingent, relational, forward-focused modes of inventive arts practice (Melrose 2003a, 2005c). As Halliday elsewhere commented, perhaps over-forcefully:

Writing deprives language of the power to intuit, to make indefinitely many connections in different directions at once, to represent experience as fluid and

indeterminate. It is therefore destructive of one fundamental human potential: to think on your toes, as we put it. (Halliday 1987:148-149)

Such a failing, if Halliday is correct, problematises any endeavour to represent, in and through writing, the cognitive creative and productive activity of choreographers. The latter might be argued, instead, to involve a capacity to think across many “timescapes” ranging from a duration measured in years to the micro-interval, near instantaneous responsiveness that characterises thinking “on your toes”²⁶.

Note on the range of research referenced

Whilst the present research undertaking is informed by Ulmer’s attention in the late 1980s to the contribution of contingency and personal experience to research practices, I will draw too from more recent research that has been taken as marking a “practice turn in contemporary theory” (Schatzki et al. 2001), in particular the enquiry of Karin Knorr Cetina into ‘the affective and relational undergirding of practice in areas where practice is creative and constructive’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:175). Knorr Cetina marked the inadequacy to her enquiry of existing conceptions that ‘emphasise the habitual and rule-governed features of practice’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:175). Melrose has noted that Knorr Cetina situated her writing in terms of 20thC European philosophy and cultural studies in what Melrose has called ‘a *millennial enquiry* into theoretical writing which has dominated cultural and critical-analytical studies in the later 20thC’ (Melrose 2003b). At the core of the present research lies a supposition of choreographic practices based on how Melrose (2003b and elsewhere) positioned Knorr Cetina’s analysis of what Knorr Cetina termed ‘knowledge-creating and –validating or ‘epistemic’ practice’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:176) to questions of professional expertise in dance and performance practices.

Knorr Cetina’s writing is significant to the present research project since it suggests that listening to a practitioner can lead to insights into inventive practice that extend beyond that individual’s practice. In the quotation below from an interview with a choreographer, Jonathan Burrows described that his decision to start researching a new duet with composer Matteo Fargion was a “risk” because of the success of their first duet as performers together:

[W]e felt that we had begun to collaborate in a way which had a clarity and an energy that we should try to build on while it was still alive. In other words, if

we stopped and didn't work together for a year or two years and then came back together, the ease with which we were communicating on the things which really connected us would be gone. (Perazzo 2005:3)

I might observe of Burrows' words how he used relational metaphors to conceptualise his collaboration as an entity in itself that must be responded to 'while it was still alive'. Burrows explained his phrase in terms of his relationship with Fargion (but which I must therefore take to be non-identical with his relationship to 'the collaboration'), arguing that an interruption might have jeopardized any future process. Burrows' words suggest that he engaged empathically with 'the collaboration' such that he felt an obligation ('we should try to build [...]'). The logic of Burrows' words therefore suggests that he was using 'relational mechanisms as resources in articulating and 'constructing' an ill-defined, problematic, non-routine and perhaps innovative epistemic practice' (Knorr-Cetina 2001:179). The affective judgement and "feel" for the interpersonal dynamics and timing of collaboration that I judge Burrows to have been describing is rarely recognized within art theoretical writings.

As Melrose has noted, Knorr Cetina's approach steps 'outside established social sciences ways of generalising practice' (Melrose 2003b); correspondingly, the present enquiry must step outside of established dance studies ways of interpreting performance. Several writers by whom the present writing has been centrally informed might also be said to have "stepped outside" established disciplinary modes. Ulmer, for example, has sought inventively to '*stimulate involuntary personal memory* [as] the point of departure for an electrated institutional practice' (Ulmer 2003:44). Brian Massumi has proposed that issues of movement, affect and sensation are as vital to cultural studies as processes of signification (Massumi 2002, referred to also in *On 'Writing' and 'Reading'*). Finally, the present thesis will cite extensively from the published writings in the last four years of my supervisor, Susan Melrose, in which she has brought the theoretical discourses of Knorr Cetina, Massumi and Sandra Rosenthal (1986) to bear on questions of dance and performance scholarship. The following quotation, for example, from a paper co-authored with Nick Hunt in 2005, conceptualises performance practices in terms that she has elsewhere traced to Massumi, Knorr Cetina and Rosenthal, amongst others:

creative practices are almost always syncretic, connective, relationally-positioned, catalytic and combinatorial[...] the processes and products of creative practices (ideas, insights, expert intuitions, inventions, concrete artefacts and so on) are combinatorial in articulation [...] It is on the basis of

this catalytic *combinatoire* that *performance-disciplinary* practices, as these are understood in the wider arts communities, are identified and developed. (Hunt and Melrose 2005:75)

Melrose's published insights have been critical to the evolution of the present project. Taking but one conference paper that Melrose presented in 2002, entitled 'Textual Turns and a Turn-up for the Books', it is possible to note her ongoing engagement in a process of reconfiguring the questions of performance studies in ways that vitally frame my own research undertaking: her writing evidences her attention to 'the "knowledge-situation" of professional live performance [as] a highly particular and curious one'; to relations of practices of performance and writing, the one heterogenous and material, the other detachable from its circumstances; and to the need to reflect, discursively, upon performance practitioners' 'singular skills in drawing, holding, working and retaining the allegiance of an audience'. She acknowledges, too, that certain choreographers effectively theorise 'through acute observation, contemplation, speculation, reflexion, and signature-marked, disciplinary delivery' (Melrose 2002b).

Melrose's work critiques a still persistent "textual turn" in performance studies, drawing upon philosopher Peter Osborne's assertion that there remains an historically-established and arguably ongoing concern in academia for 'signification' over 'aesthesis' (Melrose 2003a with respect to Osborne 2000). Theorising from a performative framework, Melrose's work proposes that performance scholarship address what has been to date a paucity of concern for processes of performance-making, production and viewer-engagement. Particularly since 2000, Melrose's publications have repeatedly proposed that performance scholarship more urgently engage with the key but very much under-theorised issues of expertise and mastery of professional performance-makers. In articles including 'Words fail me: dancing with the other's familiar' (2005a), '...just intuitive...' (2005c) and 'The curiosity of writing (Or, who cares about performance mastery?)' (2003b), Melrose has challenged the expectation, in the university, that one might actually write *about* performance practices as though from practitioner, rather than spectator-based perspectives. She has not as yet indicated how a performance-practitioner-focused *written* account of professional practice might be produced (for the very simple reason that she is not one), but instead has argued that, for example, a professional choreographer's practice is already also theoretical in character (without marking out in detail the grounds for

this judgement, but calling, instead, for a better enquiry into the term ‘theoretical’ itself). On the basis of this ‘already theoretical’ quality, such a professional creative practice supplies its own account, and that account needs to be viewed, intrinsically, as metapractice (Melrose 2002b).

"Research companions":

Writing alongside published writing by contemporary performance makers

In the course of the present research undertaking, I have written in detail alongside short texts and extracts of published writing by performance-practitioners in which they might in some sense be said to write (of) their performance-making. The texts I have written alongside, which are in most instances extracts from extended accounts by performance practitioners (a key factor in their selection here), are by Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema, Tim Etchells, Matthew Goulish, an interview by Nick Kaye with Elizabeth LeCompte, Joshua Sofaer with archaeologist sister, Goat Island and Lone Twin. With the exception of the article by Jonathan Burrows, these writings are by performance-makers, indeed theatre-makers, rather than choreographers, with whose disciplinary specificity the present research undertaking is actually concerned. I considered selecting writing more specifically by dance-makers, for example, from Deborah Hay's (2006) *My Body, the Buddhist*, Shobana Jeyasingh's contribution to *Art, Not Chance: nine artists' diaries* (2001), Diana Theodore's (2003) *Dancing on the Edge of Europe: Irish choreographers in conversation* or from articles and interviews in journals including *Contact Quarterly*, *Performance Research* and *Dance Theatre Journal*. However, the extracts and the practitioner-writers selected were chosen, in each instance, on the basis of the extent to which they allowed me to develop the particular philosophical enquiries of this thesis, as these can be related to (or seem to achieve 'fit' with) practical issues. To these ends, I would argue that what 'counts', firstly, in that selection and inclusion, is the combination of performance-making expertise and expertise in writing itself; secondly, that it is not a disadvantage to the overall research enquiry into expert-practitioner performance writing (choreographic, in the case of Lee, Brandstrup and others) that these particular extracts are drawn from the performance-making spectrum more generally. (Others might argue that the 'theatrical' 'training' of certain practitioner-writers cited here gives them access to a literary tradition which is not central to the training of dance-makers. My own position is that access of that sort will tend to have been generational, and that expert performance-making has emerged as a trans-disciplinary practice shared by "physical theatre", "dance theatre" and choreographic practitioners across the board.)

The purpose of this writing was to appraise critically the implications and shortcomings represented by passages of published writing to my research enquiry and review the extent to which practitioner-centred writing, as proposed by my thesis, already exists. My responses attempt to be alert, for example, to the modes of reading and the categorisation of readers signalled by the passages; to the question of how existing writing by artists might mark the signature-specific nature of their art-making; to the issue of whether these writers signal what might emerge as epistemological difficulties specific to writing of performance-making, such as of negotiating the different temporal economies of *experience* and *interpretation* (Kwon 2000:75). I aim to be attentive too to contexts of publication and registers of writing adopted and to the ways in which a writer may call upon textual and other authorities to support them.

I would argue that my responses, however, have also a momentum that is other than critical (as the term seems to be used in the wider context of an academic “critical theoretical” and/or “critical-analytical”). I approached these passages for how I might use them as resources for developing models, strategies and prototypes for practitioner-centred writing of dance-making. This approach might be theorised as an extension of what has been termed a ‘distant mentor’ effect (Lucas et al 2005) whereby one can learn from other writers in a field. More explicitly, I am adopting the tactic Gregory Ulmer used and described in his writing of the mid-1980s by selecting “tutor-figures” in published writing of professional dance and performance practitioners over the last decade (Ulmer 1985:p.x of Preface).

In Ulmer’s case, the tutor figure was Jacques Derrida. While I will not follow Ulmer’s take-up of Derrida’s work, for example on punning, Ulmer’s description of his approach has informed the conceptual framework of the present research. Ulmer argued that discussion of Derrida’s work might be valuably reconfigured away from “deconstruction” to “grammatology”, the latter being ‘a more inclusive notion, embracing both deconstruction and “writing” (understood not only in the special sense of textualist *écriture*, but also in the sense of a compositional practice)’ (1985:x). Ulmer’s emphasis here upon writing as a compositional practice is resonant with the praxiological dimension of my enquiry: ‘Writing is privileged in my study, then,’ he wrote, ‘in order to explore the relatively neglected “affirmative” (Derrida’s term) dimension of grammatology, the practical extension of deconstruction into decomposition’ (1985:x). Writing is privileged too in the present study, particularly in

its “research companion” thread, since it is *affirmatively* that I seek to read them as guides. The notion of an “affirmative” mode then is one that recurs often in the present research.

Ulmer further distinguished Derrida’s approach:

The difference between Writing and deconstruction may be seen most clearly in the different ways Derrida treats philosophical works (which he deconstructs) and literary or artistic texts (which he mimes). The methodologies in the two instances bear little resemblance to each other: the philosophical work is treated as an object of study, which is analytically articulated [...] Literary or plastic texts [...] are not analyzed but are adopted as models or tutors to be imitated, as generative forms for the production of another text. (Ulmer 1985: x-xi)

In the extracts I have proposed as “research companions”, I have both sought analytically to articulate the practitioner writing of performance-making, but also to work from them, in Ulmer’s phrase, as models or tutors to be imitated, as generative forms for the production of another text’ (notwithstanding that the texts I generate are of a very different mode and approach to those produced by either Derrida or Ulmer).

Ulmer’s productive take-up in the 1980s of concepts from Derrida’s writing might be paralleled in the past five years by the work extending from Gilles Deleuze’s writing by Brian Massumi. (I note Massumi’s long-standing concern with the writing of Deleuze (see Massumi 1992) however it is with what Melrose has described²⁷ as Massumi’s post-millennial, post-cultural-interpretative writing that my own research process has engaged. Massumi, describing exemplification as a writing practice, proposed extracting concepts from the writing of others’ ‘from their usual connections to other concepts in their home system and confronting them with the example or a detail from it’ (Massumi 2002:18). He described the productive effect of this manoeuvre.

The activity of the example will transmit to the concept, more or less violently. The concept will start to deviate under the force. Let it. Then reconnect it to other concepts, drawn from other systems, until a whole new system of connection starts to form. Then, take another example. See what happens [...] Incipient systems. Leave them that way. (Massumi 2002:19)

In focusing on writing published by performance practitioners, my hypothesis has been to work with these writings as provisional exemplars of practitioner-focused writing; that the “activity” of these examples might “transmit” to the concept of such a writing,

enabling me to evidence a philosophical interface of performance-making and writing. The “research companion” writings are then a tool of both practical and philosophical implication to the present research, a tool that challenges and develops the collaborative projects (discussed in the present thesis) of writing with choreographers of their dance-making. I have termed this methodological thread to my research as “research companions”, borrowing the definition performance makers Lone Twin gave to a brief publication published around 2001 that was concerned with their performance practice.

The knowledge mode of the present research undertaking is speculative and conjectural. In this, I acknowledge Melrose’s analysis of the knowledge-position of performance-makers to their works, and consequently the implications for the present research which theorises and aims to develop modes of writing focused on the knowledge perspectives of choreographers (Melrose 2005c and elsewhere, with respect to Sandra Rosenthal’s 1986 writing of “speculative pragmatism”). The citation below comes from an entry on *conjecture* by Kari Kraus in *Performance Research*, March 2002, in an edition entitled ‘On Editing’:

the process is hazily glossed metaphorically or else grounded in the successful critic’s abstract qualities of mind, which do not always lend themselves to analysis (e.g. “intuition”, “judgement”, “confidence”, “insight”, “authority”, “charisma”). For these reasons, conjecture has customarily been seen as either a practitioner’s art, the conspicuous absence of a meta-literature a symptom of the bottom-up approach it tends to favour, or a prophet’s. [...I propose we] imagine conjecture as a knowledge toolkit designed to perform “what if” analyses across a range of texts and temporal scenarios. Such an approach would value extant texts as knowledge bases ideally suited to support inferential reasoning. (Kraus 2002:20)

Kraus’ reflections on “conjecture” in editing practices are valuable to the present project by how it is identified as a practice that may be ‘hazily glossed metaphorically’ or attributed to seemingly unanalysable ‘qualities of mind’ perceivable only insofar as they are effective and ‘successful’. Questions as to the status of, as Kraus named them, “intuition”, “judgement”, “confidence”, “insight”, “authority” and “charisma”, will recur in the present thesis, sometimes otherwise worded. What I am suggesting is that the process Kraus termed *conjecture*, in a journal concerned with performance scholarship, has a notable overlap with current attempts, in scholarly and artists’ discourses, to word the practices of expert performance-makers. The present research project responds indeed to a ‘conspicuous lack of a meta-literature’ with respect to

professional choreographers' expertise that Kraus identified with respect to conjectural practices. My reason for citing Kraus' reflections is not only to observe the conjectural status of a performance-practitioner and -practice focused enquiry (a status that might be grounds for critique in other scholarly enquiries); I also wish to argue that by writing alongside practitioners' writing as "research companions", the present project uses 'conjecture as a knowledge toolkit designed to perform "what if" analyses across a range of texts and temporal scenarios'. (Kraus' focus was on textual editing, yet the reference to a range of 'temporal scenarios' suggests to me that comparison with a performance-practice-focused enquiry can be defended.)

At other points in this thesis, critical modes of writing may treat writing by performance makers as generalisable, with a wider explanatory power. The inclusion of detailed, extended commentaries of writing by performance-practitioners in the present research signals my recognition that their writing, and likewise their performance work (although in different modes), is "signature"-marked. Certain concerns and references will recur across this series of responses and will relay to other parts of the thesis. My responses were produced at different times during the research project and mark, in research narrative terms, how my thinking has shifted and developed. In selecting artists' writings to respond to, I excluded writing concerned more with performance-reception than with its making, that is to say with a spectator's perception and interpretation of performance events (even if that spectator is simultaneously the person of the performance-maker.) Therefore I excluded, for the purposes of this thesis, texts concerned with the phenomenon, motivation or experience of performance over and above a concern with the trajectories, personal and professional, by which an event of performance is produced (evidently performance-makers will always be concerned with performance, I sought however writing which was also concerned with the processes by which performances are created²⁸).

Following philosopher Peter Osborne's argument, developed in the Performance Studies field by Susan Melrose, I have focused then on texts that might suggest ways to theorise 'the formal sensible qualities' and the 'transformative and existential specificities of the expert mixed-mode arts-disciplinary practice itself' and sidestep the university's historically-established and arguably ongoing concern for 'signification' over 'aesthesis' (Melrose 2003a with respect to Osborne 2000).

A reader's interest in these texts produced by arts-practitioners is likely to be based on an extra-textual knowledge of the high reputations their authors enjoy in a

range of marketplaces as professional performance makers and on an expectation that reading will extend or shift understanding of their works and practices. Certain texts I have selected because of the reputation the authors hold both in the arts marketplace and the university; others because of a complementary relation, if tenuous, between the authors' artistic practice and those of the choreographers with whom I have been developing practitioner-focused writing. For example, I chose writing co-authored by Jonathan Burrows knowing that he had danced with Rosemary Butcher. I am conjecturing that any correspondence in dance-making practices would augment their writings' potential to me as resource. I was drawn also to writing that questioned its tools of judgment and the motives, dispositions, habits and affectivities of its production (Melrose 2003b, 2002b) even as this thesis proposes, for example in passages of self-interrogation and commentary or which experimented at a metapractical level with compositional expectation.

It might be argued, despite my aspiration to respond to selected passages of artists' writing as "research companions", that I am a reader in a university-hermeneutic sense of 'producing a reading'²⁹. The tools of "textual analysis" and judgment that I am using derive from my unreflecting undergraduate immersion in a Cambridge literary studies method and ethos of vestigial "practical criticism" from I.A. Richards', F.R. Leavis and William Empson and through to Stanley Fish, Jerome McGann, Wolfgang Iser and 'reader-response' or 'reception theory'. Aligned with this training, I might aspire to the kind of attentiveness differently described by Roland Barthes and M.A.K. Halliday to follow the 'structuration of reading' (Barthes, 1985) or a text's 'cryptogrammar' (Halliday, 1987) so as to observe, among other things, choice of registers of discourse, of rhetorical tropes, and the means of writerly production of "the self," and the "practitioner-self" of the artist.

Producing these readings, then, I selectively analyse and assimilate published writing to the purposes of my research. The practices of textual analysis and practical criticism lead me to take up a purportedly analytically disinterested and objectifying stance to the text, a stance contradictory to the engaged stance I aspire to as a practitioner-focused writer. The legitimacy of these exercises in textual response must thus be carefully negotiated within my overall research project.

1st “research companion”: ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema’ (on Appendix CD-ROM)

The reader is advised to use the Appendix CD-ROM to access the following article before continuing with this chapter; ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema’ (2003) published by *Performance Research* 8 (2).

I first approached ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema’ curious about the commissioning process for *Performance Research*. Parenthetically on the contents page, the “artist pages” are marked out editorially from what is by default the ‘main’ part of the journal, of papers more conventionally academic in genre. Visually in issues of the journal, artists’ pages frequently stand out from contributions that are otherwise lengthy, through-written and sparsely visual. I had read interviews with Burrows and seen a documentary about his early work, but was unaware of formal writing by him. (Of Jan Ritsema, I knew only that he had collaborated with Burrows.) I wondered what would motivate Burrows and Ritsema to submit an idea to *Performance Research*.

‘Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema,’ as the title indicates, appears to be composed of extracts from the artists’ notebooks. I had seen a performance by Burrows and Ritsema at the Institute for Contemporary Art, London, in October 2001 that bore the same title, *Weak Dance Strong Questions*, however their paper does not explicitly reference that event. At the time of writing the present chapter, I was working with British choreographer Rosemary Lee on writing evolved from notebooks that we both kept while she was creating a live dance-work, *Beached* (2002); I will orient my responses here to that project with Lee. For example, I observe that while Lee and I repeatedly discuss our writing’s relation to *Beached* the performance work we had not thought only to indirectly reference it textually, as Burrows and Ritsema have, through the title. The *Performance Research* text, it appears, is decidedly reticent of any ‘who, what, where’ of performance. Their “artist pages” do include photographs of Burrows and Ritsema, perhaps from performances of *Weak Dance Strong Questions*. The visual design shifts from pages of text alone, though pages of inset photographs of Burrows and Ritsema

respectively and finally to pages in which the text is printed across enlarged photographs that encompass the whole printed space. Visually, there is a suggested move “from the notebooks” to performance (documentation).

What the writing does suggest is a meta-practical level to Burrows and Ritsema’s collaboration. The notebook extracts intimate to me a collaborative attempt to unravel some of the accumulated professional habits, techniques, judgments, preferences and trained instincts of performance-making. For example, notebook entries suggest how Burrows and Ritsema observed in one another how a will or intention to dance impacted on their practice: ‘He wants to dance but he gets stuck in an image of what he thinks dancing is’; ‘When he thinks about dancing, he shifts around’. Their reflexive attention to habits of judgment is recorded too as self-observation: ‘Usually I am not interested in what happens between departure and arrival’; ‘Is it that we try to dance in a way in which every movement contains the possibility of all directions?’; ‘How would I move if I dared? How do I move when I don’t question how I am moving?’; ‘It is so difficult not wanting to be interesting’ (that is to say, not deliberately working with material that he would otherwise select as of potential performance effectiveness?) The notebook entries also raise metadiscursive questions, such as ‘How shall I keep notes?’ Their awareness of how they have observed one another indicates perhaps that they were particularly conscious of how their performance would be observed by audiences, reminding me of the research process I collaborated with Lee on entitled *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie*. (*Concluding Remarks*).

Authoring

Reading Burrows and Ritsema’s article, what is striking, at first view, is how authorship is attributed. A scholarly article is typically “signed off” with the copyrighting function of noting authors and date of completion. ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the notebooks of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema’ avoids this conventional statement of authorship. Indeed, the proper names, Burrows and Ritsema and the ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions’ performance that they toured are withheld from the text beyond its title. Neither does the ‘from the notebooks’ strap-line mark them as authors of this *Performance Research* submission, only of the notebook words from which it was composed.

The text's lack of distinction between Burrows and Ritsema might be viewed as a strategic choice, signalling an ethics of co-authorship that refuses decisions as to the ownership of ideas. Even if Burrows and Ritsema are not individually named in the text, the shifters are schematically coherent for two men's rehearsal notebooks; with only the two of them in the studio, 'he', 'I', 'you' and 'we' sufficiently identify them for the purposes of an informal notebook record.

As a reader encountering these reproduced notebook entries, I push against this aspiration to anonymity. The text is printed across blown-up photographs in which I recognise Burrows and Ritsema dancing, traces and indices to the performance that has been withheld textually³⁰. If I read, for example, 'When he dances his mouth takes a certain expression and he suddenly looks like a priest', irresistibly I look to the images, wondering, whose is the mouth.

A further authoring function is un-attributed; the title indicates 'from the notebooks' without commenting how the selection was made and edited. Signs of editing are apparent. For example, the article opens, 'In the beginning were Celan, Eliot and Thomas: poetry'. While I can imagine that Burrows or Ritsema might have first collected poetry in their notebooks or scribbled down fragments shared with one another at the start of their collaboration, the phrase, 'In the beginning,' signals to me a retrospective and narrativising voice. The tone seems lightly ironical, nudging at a Renaissance mythologised idea of the artist as *vates* (maker). On this evidence, thoughts and events recorded perhaps hastily and informally in a notebook have modulated into a writerly form that is 'from the notebook'.

Transposing studio notes to a published journal

Responding to Burrows and Ritsema's contribution to *Performance Research*, a research question may be formulated for the present enquiries: what are the research implications when words spoken or written during performance-making processes are extracted and published at a remove from that performance? Why might a research journal publish words that have typically become redundant, forgotten and put-aside in dance-making? These are questions as to reception by readers. A further question arises for me out of my sense that as a reader I am "locked-out" of the interface of performance-making and writing that Burrows and Ritsema have produced. For example, the notebook entries seem to allude in short-hand, almost private references to what their dance-making might be said to theorize (Melrose 2005c): for example,

‘this factory-of-movements-not-to-produce-specific-products’. A second question arises for my research undertaking: will writing produced in terms of performance-making processes always have this residual ‘closed’ quality to readers unconnected to the performance? This question is one that prompts critical reflection in thetic terms, but also practically affects the development of a collaborative writing practice with Lee.

A phrase such as ‘sink into the body’ might be an example of the kind of discourse Jackson had in mind when she commented on how, to some scholars, artists’ accounts were “unhearable”. Semantically, the metaphor seems derived from a mind-body dualism, whereas qualitatively the phrase could, I speculate, indicate quite the opposite; an aspiration that the experience of deliberately moving be subsumed perceptually, such that the dancer does not experience a self separate from the body and directing its movement. (To Burrows and Ritsema, the phrase may mark something else entirely, for example, an image to encourage a lowered centre of gravity in the body. The referential indeterminacy of writing is particularly pronounced in the more or less absence of other moded documentation of this performance practice). If the phrase operated effectively in the oral economy of performance-making (by *enabling it* (Melrose in conversation)), what is the effect of extracting it, as writing, from that situation?

This concern relates too to how Burrows and Ritsema allusively cite from the philosophical writings of Spinoza and from *Hamlet*, a work with an over-determined literary history (Burrows and Ritsema’s “artist pages” are notable to my research not least for the wide range of writing registers used). The studio situation in which these quotations were triggered or effective is undocumented, leaving this reader at least at a loss as to how to respond to these citations; for a reader with an academic training, the question emerges as to what interpretative framework is appropriate, given their possibly extensive and critically-systematic knowledge of these writings? By using such quotations, Burrows and Ritsema appear to assert an intellectual significance in the writing they present as performance practitioners - a claim that serves as an important precedent to my present research undertaking (which in its collaborative writing with Rosemary Lee has also included citation from literary works). Note however that this mode of citation might be considered to be ‘notional’, rather than ‘academic’. It operates as ‘atmospheric’, allusive, rather than systematic.

On not getting into an argument

The paper's strap-line, 'from the notebooks', recommends that the reader expect precisely this – notes, informal writing not worked through and honed but contingent to a particular situation, soon redundant, likely written in haste, imprecisely, without drafting and with little concern for grammar, embellishment – or readers. At source, the notebooks were not meant for me, a *Performance Research* reader, but for Burrows and Ritsema to record and organise elements of their collaboration.

The extracts from Burrows and Ritsema's notebooks are spaced across six pages and organised into multiple small sections seemingly composed from anecdotes, italicised poetic quotations, reported speech and a lengthy list of questions. The typographical layout reinforces patterns of repetition in the text by making them visible as well as cadenced: for example on the second page, the many sentences beginning 'He....' form a list by indentation.

'You are an Orangutan, he says, when he observes me.'

Reported speech and observation saturate the 'Weak Dance Strong Questions' text, particularly on its first double-spread pages. The syntactic repetitions, 'He says...', 'He wants...', 'He is...' produce cohering rhythms but also trigger for me a sense of an aloof tone by its unembellished mode of reporting. For example, a phrase such as 'it is not about being fearless but about accepting fear' appears assured to the point of platitude (notwithstanding that it continues, 'you will fail anyway'), but that assurance is undercut by silent doubts in the non-committal 'He says...' reporting. At rare moments, the reporter does offer comment (and I find I constantly speculate in its absence): 'and then he says 'when I dance my body seems younger', and I think this is worrying, I wanted to dance with an older man.'

The 'Weak Dance Strong Questions' writing strikes me as more 'closed off' to a reader without some kind of mixed-mode documentation of presentation when it becomes more emotive and/or less specific to a described event, for example, 'there is no rescue' or 'He wants[...] the performance to be touchable, which is something else than touchable'. Yet the reported mode keeps the writing concrete and vivid, more so than I might have expected from a rehearsal notebook ('When he thinks about dancing he shifts around in his chair, and he starts to curl up again, starts to get small, as though he wants to disappear.') On occasion, I feel prompted to a kind of reading ethic

by the lack of commentary; feeling that I, like the reporter, should not pry or speculate if what was said is, for example, personal and even confessional in register; ‘He says [...] he feels a lot of shame [...] he wants to disappear [...] he is the most afraid person in the world’.

Discrepancies

The time frame implied by the text for the events observed is intermittently uneven. For example, at times the text locates itself at the start of a process, at others it refers to audience response. In textual terms, the claim that it is ‘from the notebooks’ does not always strike me as credible: for example, while an artist might record an anecdote told in rehearsal, I doubt that they would record the accompanying meta-cognitive tags, ‘I can tell this story without embarrassment. No, this is a lie, I am still embarrassed’. At one point the sense of a paper composed of extracts from two separate notebooks is broken by dialogue, ‘Yes...Because I think dance is something serious’. It seems that Burrows and Ritsema or their editor have tried to assimilate phrases belonging to a framing discourse to that composed of the notebook extracts. Unconvinced as I am by the results, its inconsistency alerts me to the different economies of writing as one mode of a studio practice, and writing as a journal contribution.

Writing vulnerability

In the ‘Weak Dance Strong Questions’ writing I sense a candid exploration of personal and professional dilemmas for these two artists. Approaching Burrows and Ritsema’s writing hermeneutically, I might identify as patterns of possible themes, fear/less, risk, shame/less, consequence, im/possibility, rescue and failure (themes that resonate too in the grammar choices of imperative and modal forms.) This quality of vulnerability strikes me as unusual for an academic journal; is that vulnerability offset strategically in writing terms by those aspects of the writing that I experience as unforthcoming (and which may frustrate readers of more conventionally “academic” texts. See, for example, MacDonald 1999:62). A further question for the present research thus arises to theorise what might be experienced by certain readers as “unforthcoming” or “reticent” in artists’ writing of their performance-making (refer to *On ‘Not (Yet) Knowing’*). If Burrows and Ritsema’s collaboration, both as performance-making and writing, touched on personal-professional vulnerabilities, then their writing may be

tactically evasive and protective. The format, 'from the notebooks', shields them from having to explain and justify themselves beyond the bounds they set; a more conventional article or interview would have an unavoidable momentum to record and present further detail.

On “Writing” and “Reading”:

Dance-Making Expertise and the Economy of Writing

How might the expertise of the artist be viewed in academic contexts which focus on creative and performing arts, but largely from the positions and presuppositions of an expert spectating – a spectating which also takes the production of writing as its primary objective? I have suggested that [...] the expert choreographer thinks (in expert practice) geometrically, diagrammatically, schematically, and multi-dimensionally, rather than in the linear-dominant mode bound-in to writing. (Melrose 2005d:182)

This section surveys the emergence of Dance Studies as an academic discipline so as to situate my formation as a researcher and the methodologies and research questions of this doctorate within a dance disciplinary frame and to survey instances of recent published research which closely relate to the present enquiry. An additional reason for the present survey is that two of the choreographers with whose accounts of creative practice this thesis is centrally concerned, Rosemary Butcher and Rosemary Lee, completed undergraduate studies in dance in the UK, graduating in the late 1960s and early 1980s respectively. This training, and their subsequent contacts with institutionalised dance studies via teaching and research roles, may be expected to have informed how they collaborated with me during the present research which produced co-authored writing for university-linked publications.

It should be observed at the outset, however, that a requirement to survey the field of dance research cannot be readily met since the intellectual histories of both dance, and more broadly, performance studies, are complex and contested:

Performance conventionally employs bodies, motion, space, affect, image, and words; its analysis at times aligns with theories of embodiment, at times with studies of emotion, at times with architectural analysis, at times with studies of visual culture, and at times with critiques of linguistic exchange. (Jackson 2004:13)

In reviewing the dance studies literature, this chapter critically situates an argument introduced in the Introduction concerning the historical development of dance studies in the UK and the impact of “textualising” approaches drawn from poststructuralist practices of cultural theory dominant in the humanities in British universities from the 1970s (Rabaté 2002). Melrose has argued with reference to the writings of the

philosopher Peter Osborne, that one consequence of a “textual turn” in dance and performance studies was a relative inattention to the professional experience, skills and expertise of performance-makers:

Under the regime of the late 20thC textual turn and its dominant models of writing-production in the university, what was sacrificed, according to Peter Osborne, was an engagement with the formal, sensible, transformative and existential specificities of the expert mixed-mode arts-disciplinary practice itself. What was sacrificed - indicatively – was an expert-practice-centred enquiry into composition. (Melrose 2003a)

The present chapter examines Melrose’s assertion against instances of dance scholarship and reflects on the consequences for my research of a scholarly inattention to the expertise, experience and concerns of professional dance practitioners.

The following quotation from the writing of respected performance scholar and director Johannes Birringer might be taken as exemplary of the interpretative critical responses (here from the early 1990s) to which Melrose was referring and which address in detail questions of signification and reception rather than the artmaking process and viewer engagements by which those responses are produced. Writing of sculptures by Paul Kittelson *Bodybuilders/Mindless Competition* (1988) Birringer wrote: ‘As figures of monstrosity they may appear transparent; but if bodybuilding is *in excess* of the body proper[...] then it can only be read allegorically’ (Birringer 1993:208). The sculptures ‘can only be read’ at all if a viewer brackets off his sensate perception of them as sculpture and re-conceives them metaphorically as legible text (cf. Susan Melrose’s editorial note in a chapter by Susan Leigh Foster 2005:117). I note however that three photographs of the sculptures are reproduced alongside Birringer’s account thus providing a different possibility for engagement.

Birringer, in the work cited above, elsewhere raised the question of relations of performance practices to scholarly writing so as to reproach artists for ‘the relative absence of an on-going critical dialogue’ between the artists themselves or the artists and their audiences. (Birringer 1991:81, see also 45). As I read it, Birringer’s conviction was that it was the responsibility of artists to revise their modes of writing, rather than (as I might here prefer to argue) for scholars to revise writerly values, perspectives and expectations. In light of this, I might suggest that the present chapter’s review of scholarly interest (or lack thereof) in performance-making practices stands as complement to the “research companion” chapters of this thesis,

which are concerned with artists' accounts of performance-making in which scholarly interest has been shown to the extent that they were published in university-linked publications.

This chapter will note that the problematic inattention to questions of professional expertise in dance scholarship has continued despite the emergence of an albeit contested "performance as research" paradigm in British universities during the 1990s which provided a new basis on which certain creative practitioners could take up academic posts. This restructuring can be contextualised to a widened definition in social studies and humanities as to what constitutes performance: one writer recently celebrated the 'lively interchange between scholars and artists (and a blurring of the distinction)[...] As such artists look to everyday life, industry, popular culture, and ritual, to the outmoded and the repudiated, and to other cultures, so too do the scholars who study them' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:48). Melrose elsewhere noted (2003a), however, that what may be elided in such a 'blurring of the distinction' is the different expertise and processes of professional artists. I note too that "artist researchers" may not necessarily be working as artists in a professional arts marketplace.

Dance (Spectator) Studies³¹ as an emergent field of study

As recently as 2003 "dance" was described in a scholarly journal as 'an emerging academic discipline [...] where the epistemological ground is still contested and shifting' (Pakes 2003:128-129). The publication in 1998 however of *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by dance scholar and historian Alexandra Carter, could be perceived in knowledge-political terms as one move to affirm the legitimacy of dance as a field of scholarly enquiry. A Reader presents a collection of disparate articles and extracts as a discipline's guiding canon. The logic of publication then is to constitute or reaffirm a discipline rhetorically by naming and introducing it to a mainly student readership.

Dance has been included within British degree courses since the late 1960s firstly within education studies and then, into the 1970s, within performing arts curricula (Carter 1998:5-6 citing Janet Adshead's 1981 *The Study of Dance*, London, Dance Books). The formerly named Laban Centre for Movement and Dance validated

a three year BA(Hons) course in Dance Theatre in 1977 and in 1980 validated research degrees (www.laban.co.uk). In 1982, London Contemporary Dance School (www.theplace.org.uk) offered its first practical dance degrees and The Society for Dance Research (www.dancebooks.co.uk/sdr-uk/) was founded.

A discipline-specific citational network of critical dance scholarship in the last twenty years might include Foster (1986 & 1996), Fraleigh Horton (1987), Baner (1987) Adair (1992), Jordan (1992), McFee (1992), Cohen (1992) Burt (1995), Thomas (1995 & 2003), Cooper-Albright (1997), Adshead-Lansdale (1999), Bremser (1999), Jordan (2001) and Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg (2002). The existence of this (writerly) body of research, addressing the study of dance from perspectives of history, performance analysis, aesthetics and sociology, substantiates Carter's claim in 1998 that 'dance can now fully claim its status as a culturally significant and intellectually viable field for study' (Carter 1998:1). (I note however that only two years previously dance writer Marcia Siegel argued that 'While dance itself has made many original contributions to cultural life, the study and analysis of those contributions have been rudimentary', Siegel 1996:29). Certain historical barriers have impeded or continue to impede the scholarly study of dance including the 'low social status of dance [and] the equation of its sensual nature with its sexual potential' (Carter 1998:2). A continuing preoccupation in both dance and performance scholarship is with the "liveness" of performance events (Auslander 1999), with their situation as a peculiarly 'unverifiable real' (Phelan 1993:1, Lycouris 2000).

[O]ne of the deepest challenges of writing about performance is that the object of one's meditation, the performance itself, disappears. In this sense, performance theory and criticism are instances of writing history. Performance theory and criticism have tended to respond to the loss of the object by adapting a primarily conservative and conserving method. Writing about performance has largely been dedicated to describing in exhaustive detail [...]the performance event. (Phelan 1997:3)

More recently, Jackson has assessed how performance's existence as event has affected its credibility as a research object:

[I]ts intensely contingent status as a research object, a radical contextuality[...] makes it difficult to locate as a research object at all. The production and reproduction of [*university-based and writerly*] knowledge is, to some extent, a formalist operation in de-contextualization. To the extent that the discernment and dissemination of knowledge requires boundaries and containment, performance has fared unevenly in the academy. The imprecise boundaries of the theatrical event make it difficult to know where the research

object ended and its relevant context began. The intensely intimate, varied, social, and inefficient character of performance pedagogy make it less amenable to mass reproduction on the grand scales of a modernizing university. (Jackson 2004:6)

This history of the emergence of dance studies is significant to the present research. To argue that performance's ontology lies in "disappearance" (Phelan 1993, Auslander 1999) is suggestive of a spectating perspective rooted in dance and performance studies claims to institutional legitimacy, with consequences therefore to dance research which seeks practitioners' perspectives. (I note however that Phelan's *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance* (1993) sought 'a way of knowing which does not take surveillance of the object, visible or otherwise, as its chief aim', Phelan 1993:1-2). Carter's *Dance Studies Reader* participated in the discourses of liveness/disappearance when it cited, on its first page, a comment from dance and performance scholar Elizabeth Dempster that differently echoes Jackson (above) and Phelan (1993):

For dance practitioners, dance completes itself in the moment of its disappearance, that is, in performance, and yet it is the non-reproducibility, the *tracelessness* of performance, which has been regarded as the greatest impediment to its acceptance as a credible object of research. (Carter 1998:1-2, citing Dempster 1994:3, *Writings on Dance*, Issue 10).

Dempster's generalisation, at least as it is cited by Carter, might be challenged by dance-makers with, for example, a methodological commitment to making "open works" (Rubidge 2000). Melrose has pointed out that a concern with *completion* characteristically indicates a spectator's knowledge standpoint by which it is assumed that every performance effect may be attributed to an authorial artist (Melrose 2005c).

A dance-practitioner might respond to Dempster that s/he understands a piece not as an achieved totality but as something that s/he is still working on, perhaps due to sensed inadequacies or to an unresolved question of composition or production (Melrose 2003a). Rosemary Lee, for example, noted to me her continuing uncertainty with a decision she made to include a certain section of movement material (Lee and Pollard 2006). In this way, a dance-maker might feel that her or his work is, as Knorr Cetina described "epistemic objects", 'always in the process of being materially defined [and] can never be fully attained' (Knorr Cetina 2001:181); the "finished work" 'is itself always incomplete, is itself simply another partial object' (Knorr Cetina 2001:183). A dance practitioner might respond too to Dempster that her or his

work does not disappear but rather is partly retained as expertise (Melrose 2005c). As a visual event, performance might be said to be traceless for spectators; dancers however will carry neurological traces of their rehearsed dancing (Brandstrup and Pollard 2006, Calvo-Merino et al 2004, Risner 2000, Melrose unpublished conversation 2006).

Dempster's comment, as cited by Carter, sought to represent the perspective of a dance practitioner but instead, I have suggested, appears drawn from a spectating-based scholarly perspective. Scholarly slippages of this kind not only occur frequently in dance scholarship (instances are commented on elsewhere in this thesis) but are a continuing hazard to the present research.

Approaches to dance analysis

The current survey reflects critically on dance scholarship but must also acknowledge how the practices of writing and observing that I used as a dance scholar in the present enquiry were schooled by practices of written dance analysis. My formation as a researcher was a product of what Helen Thomas in 1996 described as 'a shift of interests [in dance scholarship] towards the social, cultural sciences and humanities' (Thomas 1996:63). Citing the then current appeal of discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism to dance analysis, she observed that 'significant theoretical and methodological shifts in dance scholarship had begun to be set into motion from the latter half of the 1980s. The new trends have centred on a concern to explicate the relations between dance and culture and to analyze dance as a mode of representation' (Thomas 1996:65). By its title, Susan Leigh Foster's seminal *Reading Dancing: bodies and subjects in contemporary American dance* (1986), for example, might be said to be exemplary of a structuralist legacy in dance analysis of the 1980s and 1990s. The textual trope, "reading dancing", remains frequently unchallenged in more recent dance scholarship (for example, in 1999, Janet Adshead-Lansdale edited a collection entitled *Dancing texts: intertextuality in interpretation*).

In Carter's 1998 *Dance Studies Reader*, dance analytic approaches were surveyed by Janet Adshead's 'An introduction to dance analysis' (Adshead 1998:163-70).

If analysis is seen as a close examination of the parts of a dance in order to make an interpretation of it and to evaluate it then this process would appear to be *the fundamental skill* required whatever one's specific interest in dance. The choreographer, performer, critic and notator all work with these same skills and concepts although they do so in different ways. Furthermore, the results of their skills, the choreography, the performance, the criticism and the score are all *understood* and *evaluated* using the same basic skills and concepts. (Adshead 1998:168, emphasis in original)

It is striking that Adshead identified analytic processes as constitutive to choreographing and performing as well as to dance criticism, since "analysis" is by scholarly convention more usually understood as being produced in formal writing that would identify, interpret and evaluate features of a dance from a spectating perspective. From the standpoint of the present enquiry, I might wish to take this statement as one producing a challenge to a spectating/textualising trope which I have argued underpins much dance analysis.

The *choreographer* uses analysis to further the end of making a dance, both as part of the creative process and by examining critically what s/he has made previously and what others have made. The *performer* uses analysis in order to improve technical skill and to facilitate understanding of the structure of the dance for the purpose of interpretation. (Adshead 1998:169)

Adshead finished with the observation that when a spectator uses analysis 'the end product is not a dance or a performance of one, but the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of it' (Adshead 1998:169), so emphasising spectating as *secondary production* (Melrose 2005d:175). Adshead concluded, however, that '[i]n a fundamental sense the choreographer and the performer share this spectatorial view of the dance' (Adshead 1998:169). The basis for my enquiry into a writing of practitioner-centred knowledges of dance-making necessitates a rebuttal of the assumption that dance-maker and dance-critic might use the 'same process' of analysis. The norm here seems modelled against that of a spectator-critic such that choreographers and dancers (and the unmentioned technical and design teams) are conceived as types of spectators. The grounds for arguing the unitary nature of this viewpoint are problematic. "Spectating" typically describes how one might watch a performance, most probably for the first and only time, from the removed standpoint of a non-participant; spectating is largely reactive before it is productive (of 'understanding'). Different choreographers, dancers and audience members, however, *see, watch, notice, and look again* at dance from different times and places and with different motivations and modes. My argument is that it is misguided to conceive of

these activities in terms of the subject position of spectator. The present research aims to mark and elucidate how choreographers at different times and places, for varying reasons and in shifting modes, *see, watch, notice*, and *look again* at dance in the making (or “visual performance” in the case of Rosemary Butcher).

Adshead carefully commented that the fact of a choreographer’s reasoning is not in doubt for all that it may never be ‘made public, or even put into words’ (Adshead 1998:169). It is troubling however that she related how ‘it may be sufficient that [this analysis] is only partly verbalized, i.e. to the extent that the dancers can pick up the steps and the choreographer explain them’, with ‘for the spectator who is a casual theatre-goer [...] the same may apply’ (Adshead 1998:169). Adshead seemed to be recognising that dance-makers may use spoken language economically in conjunction with other modes of communication. However, ‘partly verbalised’ suggests a lack (and an uncertainty about the other side to the ‘partly’, of other than verbal modes of analysis); whereas Melrose, in the quotation used as epigraph to this chapter, argued that the ‘expert choreographer *thinks* (in expert practice) *geometrically, diagrammatically, schematically, and multi-dimensionally*’ (Melrose 2005d:182). Admittedly then, analysis in the rehearsal studio might be said to take place only partly in verbal terms, but, when successful, that analysis, whatever its mode, will be precise, functional and aimed at producing change. The quality of analytic processes in professional dance-making then is obscured and under-estimated by being allied with the perhaps informal, un-reflected analysis of a “casual theatre-goer”.

I propose here to examine an extract from a dance analysis which is particularly apt to my project since the researcher situated her performance analysis against her response to the account given by the choreographer of how that performance came to be created. This orientation allows me to observe certain difficulties posed by a practitioner’s account to dance scholarship which I will suggest may be taken as exemplary. The extract comes from a work of feminist dance history by Sally Banes, *Dancing women: female bodies on stage*, published in the same year as Carter’s *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*. One section of Banes’ book is concerned with the life and work of performer, teacher and choreographer Mary Wigman whom Banes positioned as ‘the leading figure of the *Ausdruckstanz* (expressive dance) movement in Germany between the two world wars’ (Banes 1998:125-136,125). In the

pages cited, Banes analysed Wigman's solo, *Witch Dance* (1914, reworked as *Witch Dance II* in 1926) and included a discussion of the gendered representation of witches historically. Banes' analysis also situated Wigman's choreography and performance style in relation to German Expressionist art, specifically to *Ausdruckstanz*, and to primitivism in western art more generally. Banes drew into her analysis Wigman's description of the making of *Witch Dance* and observed that she was addressing what she termed 'Wigman's rhetoric' although not because Banes was concerned with whether Wigman 'herself believed it, thought she believed it, or simply produced it for public consumption to enhance the dance's mystique' (Banes 1998:129) (although Banes did not identify the readership for whom Wigman produced this description). Instead, Banes described how as a historian she read Wigman's account critically as 'the myth she constructed about the dance – its origins, feeling-tones and meaning'; not only does the dance thematise, Banes argued, 'that which is wild, barbaric, evil, greedy, enigmatic [...] but we are instructed to understand the role of the artist as that of a vessel, possessed and guided by invisible spirits' (Banes 1998:129).

Banes' meta-discursive commentary articulated her scholarly standpoint as historian and reflected on how she was citing Wigman's writing of dance-making so that it operated as a writing of dance history. What is of particular interest to my research project is that she critiqued Wigman's practitioner-account of dance-making for failing to refer to her specific skills and mastery as a choreographer. As this chapter has outlined above, a premise of my research, following Melrose (2002c and elsewhere) is that Dance Studies has systematically itself failed to include in its account the skills and mastery of dance practitioners. Banes was thus critiquing Wigman for an omission made in the first quarter of the 20th century that was itself enacted in Banes' own writing, produced by and within late 20th century discourses of Dance Studies. Melrose has argued elsewhere that systematic omissions of this kind render practitioner understandings of their own expertise abject (Melrose 2005c, discussed further in *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'*). Banes' critique is suggestive therefore of an unexamined and conflicting engagement with the voice of a dance practitioner in the field of Dance Studies.

Banes did not explicitly identify the omissions she was critiquing in Wigman's account, yet she adopted an ironised position of disbelief: 'But surely, despite the evocative rhetoric, the dance did not simply invade Wigman's body from the world of spirits'. She noted, for example, that 'it bears too much resemblance to various Asian

dance-drama forms, which could have easily influenced the choreographer, given her fascination with the Orient' (Banes 1998:129). Problematically, Banes did not elaborate on the grounds of "resemblance", despite that the 'Asian dance-drama forms' in question are conservative and discipline-based. Banes continued, 'For another thing, the dance is masterfully constructed. It is no loose outpouring of inspiration, but a tightly designed composition that skillfully creates an image of sinister power' (Banes 1998:129). Banes did not further qualify her judgment of mastery; the history she wrote recognised the affective power for contemporary spectators of Wigman's solo without examining in detail either the choreographic structures or the skills producing the performance effects that might have triggered such spectator responses. Banes might have speculated, for example, that Wigman's "myth" metaphorically supported her to explore movement and a performance persona that was innovative compared to how she had trained as a performer, notwithstanding that she would then have worked and retained material in terms of her professional understanding of what would be effective to a quite particular audience.

Banes' thematically based analysis of *Witch Dance* situated Wigman's work against that of her contemporaries in European dance making on the basis of its performance effects but only briefly referred to Wigman's dance-making practices: 'Her molding of space [...] through the various modes of spatial harmony she analyzed with Laban created dance images of intense action' (Banes 1998:125). The tone of Banes' description of the dance's opening seems to me detached, detailing the movement anatomically, 'her knees bent', 'stretching her right arm straight up' (Banes 1998:129). Metaphors, when used, are minimal, for example, 'She claws the air with her hands' which seems to allude to popular imaginings of the figure of a "beast" or witch with claw hands. Her account contrasted with the rhetoric of a contemporary account she cited: 'like a giant, the red and gold, phantom-like figure rears up in the space [...] the fingers open and close[...] it is as if something invisible were being severed with eerie industry' (Banes 1998:130). Banes' analysis, as it is encapsulated in her description, seems to me unable to account for the dramatic, expressive performance effects and fascination triggered for a contemporary critic; her account is however printed alongside a photograph of Wigman performing *Witch Dance*. Banes traced Wigman's interest in religious mysticism and the influence on her of German Expressionism but not the artistic mastery on the basis of which performance effects of the 'wild, barbaric, evil, greedy [and] enigmatic' were achieved within professional

production values of the day, and consequently by which her performances were admired by her contemporaries.

Banes continued, describing a performance recorded on a fragment of archive footage, that ‘The witch is an alien figure, part human and part animal. Her mode of seated locomotion seems inhuman’ (Banes 1998:135). Yet her analysis of the effect of the ‘inhuman’ - ‘seated locomotion’ – is insufficient as its cause. Many pre-crawling infants move by ‘seated locomotion,’ or what parents term “bottom shuffling”, triggering perhaps a smile of amusement from the onlooker, but not a sense of the alien. Banes’ account is exemplary then of how a spectator-critic’s description may misrecognise the complexity of performance-making. In identifying ‘seated locomotion’, her words isolated, objectified and interrupted a dance effect that was produced relationally. The difficulty then to the present research enquiry is (as the omission I have marked in Banes’ account reveals) that dominant spectating-based modes of writing in dance and performance studies will tend to fail to register performance-making as multi-modal and so misrecognise how performance effects are triggered for a spectator. The analysis of performance effects may produce evocative descriptions of what was seen in an unfolding moment of performance, but does not provide a way to orientate to a practitioner’s perspective whereby such a moment is a performance effect calculated speculatively through a rehearsal and production process of reworking, combining and transforming performance elements and variables across different modes.

Towards practice and practitioner-focused dance analysis

I have been tracing a spectating-oriented tendency in written dance analysis. Increasingly, however, dance scholars, particularly those who identify themselves as practitioner-researchers, have explored modes of written analysis that might focus on the practices and experience of dance-makers. Many of these researchers take a conceptual starting point in phenomenological philosophy and/or in approaches drawn from the work of modern dance pioneer Rudolf Laban (1879-1958).

If I return to Carter’s 1998 Dance Studies Reader, an approach motivated by phenomenology is exemplified in a paper by Sondra Fraleigh entitled ‘A vulnerable glance: seeing dance through phenomenology’ (Fraleigh 1998:135-43). However, her paper is characteristic, I wish to argue, of a preoccupation in dance analytic approaches

informed - less or more systematically - by phenomenological philosophy, to performance as an event (with sometimes a spectating-inflected concern with the experience of performance as ephemeral); by contrast, the present enquiry is concerned with processes of dance-making that precede a performance event.

Fraleigh wrote of how phenomenology is 'present-centred in its descriptive aims' (Fraleigh 1998:135) and outlined a major strand of phenomenology in the first half of the twentieth century by how the work of Edmund Husserl was differently taken up by, amongst others, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Paul Ricoeur, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel and Simone de Beauvoir. The present-centred descriptive apparatus Fraleigh presents may be particularly valuable to a practitioner-researcher who seeks to articulate enquiries from the knowledge standpoint of a dance practitioner and which prioritises her or his perceptual dance-based experience. My research must however also take into account the future-focus of choreographers at work for whom a work may partially exist at different times over an extended period of time.

The research stance called for by the present enquiry contrasts with that of a dance phenomenologist as described by Fraleigh: 'The phenomenologist approaches the task of defining or describing a phenomenon [...] as though seeing it fresh for the first time' (Fraleigh 1998:138). A dance-maker, unlike a spectator seeing a new work, will only intermittently and strategically adopt such a viewpoint. Fraleigh argued however for the benefits of 'seeing dance through phenomenology' since alongside 'changing sense impressions of the dance as it flows through time' phenomenological analysis will support:

insight into the essence of the dance. By essence here I mean that something is discerned which characterizes or typifies the dance, so that it is recognised as itself and not some other dance. The dance then becomes more than sense impressions of motion. The essence of the dance is not identical with its motion. It arises in consciousness as the motion reveals the intent of the whole and its parts. (Fraleigh 1998:137)

In the above statement, Fraleigh appeared to theorise qualities that might be attributed to a choreographic "signature" (Melrose 2002b) although her conception suggested a stable idealisation of a work rather than, as conceived in the present thesis, a work as one expression of a provisional, contingent, ongoing project. Her account of how the 'essence' of a dance is 'discerned' and 'recognised' also suggested a conception of knowledge as certain and spectating based, whereas I am enquiring into dance

practitioners' knowledge as speculative. Fraleigh's 1998 account of "the dance" might in more recent years be expected to reflect theories that 'the viewing or embodied reception of visual artworks is a *process* that can be engaged as performative' (Jones and Stephenson 1999:2, also Parker and Sedgwick 1995):

Since the 1960s, visual art practices, from body art to Minimalism, have opened themselves to the dimension of theatricality in such a way as to suggest that art critics and art historians might reassess our own practices of making meaning through an engagement with the processes of art production and reception as *performative* [...] meaning comes to be understood as a negotiated domain, in flux and contingent on social and personal investments and contexts. By emphasizing this lack of fixity and the shifting, invested nature of any interpretative engagement, we wish to assert that interpretation itself is worked out as a performance between artists (as creators, performers and spectators of their work) and spectators (whether 'professional' or non-specialist). (Jones and Stephenson 1999:1-2)

Fraleigh's predication of "the dance" would elide, I wish to argue, how it might now be said that her sense of that dance was triggered relationally in a performative process between Fraleigh as spectator and certain skilled, individual dance-makers. A phenomenological analysis of dance then, insofar as Fraleigh accounted it, will be concerned with the dance as perceived and reflected on by the writer but will not directly attend – as my research must – to the decisions, judgments, accidents and compromises made by the artistic and technical team in terms of which perception of a "dance" was triggered for the writer.

The phenomenological writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty published in post-war France are frequently cited in dance scholarship to acknowledge the "lived experience" of dance-makers and audiences (Carter 1999:96). Kirsty Alexander, dance artist, teacher and assistant director of London Contemporary Dance School, for example, described in 2003 how Merleau-Ponty's writing developed her understanding of dancers' experiences of the movement work Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT)³²:

[P]henomenology, with its primacy of perception and its concern with embodiment, philosophically unravels many of the ideas experienced in SRT [...] The phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1989) grounds philosophy and science in a direct and pre-reflective relationship with the world and in doing so articulates what the dancer in the releasing process experiences kinaesthetically. (Alexander 2003:20)

Another example is from the research of the late Rebecca Skelton, dancer and teacher, who cited Merleau-Ponty's writings to further her investigation into 'the experience of

the dancer and space or more precisely the dancer-and-her-space as one' (Skelton 2003:27). On occasion I am uncertain as to the comparisons drawn by dance scholars between their dance-based observations and the writings of this phenomenologist. In the quotation previously, for example, Alexander identified what Merleau-Ponty *articulates* (or rather, articulated in post-war France) with what a (nameless, generalised) dancer *experiences*, conflating, it might be said in philosophical terms, orders of the *sensible* and the *intelligible*, or at the least not defining what can be the same between activities of writing and dancing.

Dancer and scholar Susan Leigh Foster, by contrast, has enquired into relations of writing and dancing in ways that attest to the influence of the cultural studies 'textual turn' in dance scholarship and have informed the framing of the present research. In a further chapter of the *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, Foster foregrounded the socio-political interpretative person of the researcher by including a description of her sensory experience of writing at a desk, a decision that might be compared to changes in writing practices of critical ethnography from the mid 1980s (see the chapter *In Proximity*. Indeed, Foster has cited anthropological analyses of a person's habitual or fractional gestures, concluding that '[a]ll a body's characteristic ways of moving resonated with aesthetic and political values', Foster 1998:182).

In the Routledge essay, Foster argued that a 'body [...] is a bodily writing' and that one might 'construe bodies' movements as varieties of corporeal writing' (Foster 1998:186).

Where bodily endeavours assume the status of forms of articulation and representation, their movements acquire a status and function equal to the words that describe them. The act of writing about bodies thereby originates in the assumption that verbal discourse cannot speak *for* bodily discourse, but must enter into 'dialogue' *with* that bodily discourse. (Foster 1998:186)

While I would prefer not to extend, as Foster did in the 1990s, a trope of writing to categorise bodily movement and activity, in the section of the thesis entitled *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'*, I will reflect in terms of performance-making practices, on a related question posed by Yve Lomax's question as to how we may speak not for an event but *with* one (Lomax 2004:6). Foster proposed that writing might 'dialogue' with dance by being evocative of it:

Describing bodies' movements, the writing itself must move. It must put into play figures of speech and forms of phrase and sentence construction that evoke the texture and timing of bodies in motion. (Foster 1998:187)

Foster's metaphorical conception of "writing that moves" would appear to turn on a sense of the *performative* in its strongest sense and might be indebted to Barthes' distinction between *readerly* and *writerly* texts (Barthes 2000, French original 1970). Was Foster conceiving of writing such that a reader could recognise in it, as was Alexander's conviction of the writing of Merleau-Ponty, what they had elsewhere experienced kinaesthetically? Yet if the writing seeks to evoke, that is, poetically call to mind or stir up qualities of 'bodies in motion', does the underlying presumption remain that such writing might stand-in for a performance through a logic of representation? Peggy Phelan made in 1997 an influential argument for "performative writing": 'Rather than describing the performance event [...] I want this writing to enact the affective force of the performance event again, as it plays itself out in an ongoing temporality made vivid by the psychic process of distortion' (Phelan 1997:11-12). Foster may have been envisaging a mode of what Phelan termed "performative writing", yet Phelan's account made an important distinction; what was to be enacted in writing was not 'the texture and timing of bodies in motion', as Foster seems to have sought, but their 'affective force' on Phelan as she prepared to write.

Alexander, in the quotation discussed previously, seemed drawn to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy by an affirming match she recognized to elements of her knowledge as a dance-practitioner (although Alexander wrote of a dancer's "experience", not using the term knowledge). Phelan, on the basis of the above extract, might be more circumspect about such a match since of her own project she commented:

The events I discuss here sound differently in the writing of them than in the "experiencing" of them, and it is the urgent call of that difference that I am hoping to amplify here[...] (I want you to hear my wish as well as my miss). (Phelan 1997:12)

I have not defined the present research as a project of "performative writing" yet acknowledge that a connection or resemblance exists between practices of performative writing (and related, live and embodied writing), and indeed, practices of performance documentation which may include writing, and the collaborative writing practices theorized in the present thesis. At times, for example, the writing a

choreographer and I have produced might seek to ‘enact the affective force of the performance’ (or other moment in a process of dance production). However, the overall research is concerned rather with questions of a practitioner’s knowledge relation to their creative practice, rather than in a project to capture as writing a qualitative sense of performance-making.

I have been examining modes of written analysis that begin to focus on the practices and experience of dance-makers and which draw their influence from phenomenological philosophy and from somatic research in fields of movement, dance and physical therapy (in several instances developed from the work of Laban or his students). It appears to me that the comment by performance director and scholar Anna Fenemore, whose research draws on somatic research, may be characteristic of other practitioner-researchers when she wrote that Merleau-Ponty’s work provided her with ‘a framework in which ‘feelings’ might be seen (through acknowledgement and articulation) as knowledge’ (Fenemore 2003). The present research too takes its impetus from the experience, understanding and feelings of a dance practitioner yet is concerned not with illuminating and situating the feelings (knowledge) of a practitioner but with reflecting on the implications for performance research of proposing (or acknowledging) that a practitioner’s position with regard to knowledge of a situation and practice is different to that of an onlooker (the point is seemingly banal, yet dance scholarship, as noted in *Positioning*, has frequently privileged the knowledge positions of spectators without acknowledging that the ways a practitioner might know have been elided.)

Ballet practitioner and scholar Jennifer Jackson (2005) commented on precisely this difference of knowledge position when she described how she referenced ‘ideas from somatic studies to suggest that the outside perspective on ballet is categorically different from the inside perspective and, thus, the nature of what is perceived’ (Jackson 2005:26). She acknowledged that ‘the resonance of the debates raised in [her] paper with phenomenological philosophy and behavioural psychology’ but claimed that she attempted to write (with an abject qualifier that I would question) ‘simply from my expertise in dance practice’ (Jackson 2005:26).

Dance scholars Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Ana Sanchez-Colberg argued in 2002, from a 21st century approach to “choreological” studies that they pioneered drawing on the work of Laban, ‘for a dance theory that comes from dance practice’

(Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg 2002:5). The practice-focus of their aspiration has a clear relation to the premise of the present research, although I do not aim at producing a general dance theory, but to articulate and reflect on the difficulties of achieving a practice-, and practitioner-focused scholarship. Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg have theorised dance practice and scholarship as follows:

Dance practice is one of embodiment[...]scholarship that focuses on embodiment poses a challenge to other forms of critical analysis. Embodying is a practical process not necessarily compatible with verbal language[...] Choreological scholarship [...] seeks to debate/articulate the implications of embodiment within the complex web of inter-relationships in dance practice, which results from the inter-relatedness of the triadic perspective of creation, performance and reception. (2002:7-12)

“Embodiment” is not a term that I have employed in this thesis although it occurs frequently in dance scholarship, particularly that which is choreologically informed and often with reference to the writings of Bert O. States (1985) and Stanton Garner (1995). Jackson has noted the intellectual enmeshment of performance studies, whereby ‘[o]ne “theorist of embodiment” may derive from phenomenology, another from social theory, and another from kinesthesiology, all of which may operate with different notions of identity, agency, and bodily integrity’ (Jackson 2004:13). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett noted a recently-emerged approach in performance studies that shares in this variously and broadly-conceived paradigm of embodiment and which ‘does not take text as its point of departure, but rather the “knowing body” and the corporal dimension of performance’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:46).

For a performance practitioner-researcher, a scholarly question of embodiment may be further complicated. Dancer, choreographer and scholar Carol Brown, for example, has described her research engagement in ‘the ‘materialism of the flesh’ school of Continental philosophy [...] with the writings of Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Gilles Deleuze, Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz amongst others, together with an investigation of the spatial thought of a range of architects including Daniel Libeskind, Le Corbusier, Bernard Tschumi and Zaha Hadid’ (Brown 2003:6-7). Her reading engagement was, she said, not contemplative in modes familiar to academic work, but ‘dynamic’; ‘the filtration of their theories through a practice I consider to be a *philosophy in the flesh*. It is a practice which happens in transit, between venues, performance commitments, rehearsals and productions as a kind of philosophical nomadism’ (Brown 2003:7). She referred to her doctoral research in the early 1990s

which was examined as “embodied theory”, ‘a way of knowing which averted the traditional character of knowledge by refusing to distance thinking from moving [...] thought from the material specificity of bodies[...] I called this knowledge corporeography a thinking through the body’ (Brown 2003:8). The question then rose, as Brown observed:

If we are to accept that, through choreography, the connectedness of the living tissues of the body can create an alternative system of thought then we dislodge one of the central premises of Western thinking, that being and language are one. We might ask therefore, how can I write or speak of this power that lies outside language? (Brown 2003:7)

Brown’s account of ‘thinking through the body’ would seem to share in what Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg argued of how a reflectively embodied research engagement will problematise the existing critical model of research dominant in some sectors of the university. In categorising dance practice as embodied, Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg thereby asserted that dance practice-focused scholarship – which they might define as “choreological” – called for modes of scholarship other than the critical analytic. My present research would therefore appear closely aligned to their overall project, particularly in the emphasis Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg placed (as cited above, 2002: 7-12) on dance as a relationally-produced, *performative* phenomenon.

However, in introducing a choreological approach to dance research, Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg in their 2002 publication were focused on examples of “choreological” performance analysis that do not appear to me to engage with practitioners’ knowledge-perspectives. For example, they wrote that ‘[t]hrough her aesthetic choices Butcher shows how the nexus between strands is a crucial aspect of choreographic treatment’ (2002:44). The choreological metadiscourse of a “nexus between strands” derives, I judge, from Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg’s scholarly practices rather than from Butcher’s choreographic practices; why then is a choreologically-framed interpretation of a performance effect attributed to a practitioner’s intention? Melrose (2005c) has examined how hermeneutic analysis in dance and performance scholarship has (as would appear in this instance) systematically misidentified performance effects as causes. Claiming to speak for a dance practitioner and her decision-making practices, what is elided once again is that the dance-practitioner’s perspective remains unwritten.

Discourses of embodiment have not, it would appear to me, in this instance produced a critique of spectating-based knowledge from which the present research, which aims at a writing interface with practitioner-based knowledge, could build. The writing of Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg seemed instead on occasion to objectify creative practitioners and their practices in ways that my writing has sought to avoid. (I note that Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg's text had a sometimes critical reception amongst dance scholars. See, for example, Briginshaw 2003:46-7).

Dance within Performance Studies

In general, between 1955 and 1975 and across a wide range of cultural practice and research, there was an attempt to pass from product to process, from mediated expression to direct contact, from representation to presentation, from discourse to body, from absence to presence. Performance Studies' passage to paradigm was initially driven by this general movement. (McKenzie 2001:38)

While the dance scholarship surveyed in the present chapter has made little reference to the field of performance studies, performance scholars frequently list dance under the umbrella of their concerns. This chapter therefore surveys the emergence of the field of performance studies as it impacts on my dance-focused enquiry, particularly in terms of institutional acceptance of "practice as research" which appears to have been driven by "performance" as a cross-disciplinary identity. Dance scholar Anna Pakes noted in 2003 the 'paucity of reflection on the problems specific to dance practice as research, critical debates within the performing arts to date usually centering on other types of performance practice' (Pakes 2003:129).

The field of performance studies has a complex intellectual history, emerging from several disparate intellectual fields from around the 1950s. Performance theorists cite a number of origin narratives; Shannon Jackson noted their diversity:

[For] those who proceed from literary studies and linguistic philosophy, J.L.Austin is a rediscovered intellectual predecessor; Richard Bauman figures more prominently for folklorists just as Kenneth Burke does for social theorists, Victor Turner for anthropologists, Judith Butler for queer theorists, and so on. (Jackson 2004:12)

As recently as 2001, Jon McKenzie proposed an impressive general theory of performance. Argued from an expert-spectating position, McKenzie's writing is of restricted extension to the present enquiry into practitioner-focused writing; however his analysis cited below usefully situates the emergence of Performance Studies alongside two other knowledge paradigms:

[P]erformance is a stratum of power/knowledge that emerges in the United States after the Second World War. Its emergence can be traced, in part, through at least three research paradigms which rest atop it: Performance Management (organizational performance), Performance Studies (cultural performance), and Techno-Performance (technological performance). (McKenzie 2001:19-20)

Following Melrose and others, I have been tracing how dance and performance studies have emerged from the positions and suppositions of “expert-spectating” (Melrose 2003b). Previous to the last half decade, this orientation has seemed a disciplinary blind-spot; Herbert Blau’s *The Audience* (1990), a densely learned, allusive and philosophical work, for example, is a rare major study of spectatorship: ‘How we think about an audience is a function of how we think about ourselves, social institutions, epistemological processes, what is knowable, what not, and how, if at all, we may accommodate the urge for collective experience’ (Blau 1990:28). Blau’s approach was unusual in performance scholarship of the time in that he was as attentive to issues of acting technique, design and production as to dramatic texts and modes of theatre criticism.

In his study of the audience, Blau drew from the practices of observation emphasized in Brecht’s theatre; it is important that I acknowledge the precedent of Brecht’s theatre for the present research which by contrast draws from ethnographic practices of participant-observation (refer to chapter entitled *In Proximity*). Blau, for example, developed his critique of collectivity in the notion of audience by following Brecht in a ‘critique of empathy and representation’ in an audience for what is performed for them (Blau 1990:273): ‘[I]n the desire for (too much) participation, identification is displaced/dispersed’ (Blau 1990:297). Blau’s critique may compromise my research methodologies of studio observation (*In Proximity*); in my research, I participated neither as artist nor performance spectator, experienced both feelings of engagement and exclusion from the work in progress and might be said to have developed writing with artists at times on the basis of a sense of empathy with them through which it was my conviction that I gained insight into their experience of art-making (see once more, *In Proximity*). (I note however that my relation to performance practitioners, unlike the audience of Blau’s critique, was not restricted to a performance practitioner’s “persona” in performance.)

Blau cited Brecht’s distrust of ‘empathy as an instance of sympathy’ and continued:

For sympathy is what draws things toward each other in an affinity that wants to intensify until it is nothing but the Same[...] There is the connection, moreover, between empathy and emulation – leading eventually to the audience as a body of vicarious experience[...] So too, the distance between observer and observed, stage and audience. (Blau 1990:301)

Blau's analysis of experiences of empathy by an audience prompts me to consider the ways that my own sense of engagement and commitment in a choreographer's work may be inflected by a spectating mode that I might otherwise be unaware of since my research focus is on studio practices. Reading Blau's work, therefore, I am reminded not to underestimate epistemologically the significance of events of performance for my enquiry into performance-making.

I discuss in the section of the thesis entitled *In Proximity*, the 'ethnographic turn' enacted methodologically by my research but observe in the present survey that a turn to anthropology has historical precedents in Performance Studies. During the 1960s and 1970s, a disciplinary exchange took place between the study of performance and of anthropology which, it has been argued, was seminal to the emergence of Performance Studies:

Theater provided anthropologists and ethnographers with a model for studying how people and societies embody symbolic structures in living behavior. Social actors, role playing, the scripting and rehearsing of interactions [...] all of these concepts were explicitly developed from the study of theater and applied to the analysis of ceremonies, festivals, and rituals. Over these same two decades, however, concepts developed by ethnographic studies of performance were used by theater and humanities scholars to theorize the social dimensions of theater and other emerging genres of performance. The work of Victor Turner was especially influential here. (McKenzie 2001:35)

The work of Victor Turner has subsequently been criticised by anthropologist Clifford Geertz and others as disregarding the specificity of a social situation in favour of an overview of, for example, four phases of 'breach, crisis, redress, and *either* reintegration *or* recognition of schism' (Turner: 1982:68). Clifford Geertz in the article 'Blurred genres: the refiguration of social thought', first published 1980, wrote that:

[H]ospitableness in the face of cases is at once the major strength of the ritual theory version of the drama analogy [theorised by Victor Turner] and its most prominent weakness. It can expose some of the profoundest features of the social process, but at the expense of making vividly disparate matters look drably homogeneous[...]the individuating details [...]are left to encyclopedic empiricism. (Geertz 1980, 2004:65-6)

I wish however to cite Turner's work as precedent to my enquiry (as observer-writer in collaboration with performance-makers) by how Turner collaborated with theatre director and theorist Richard Schechner (one of the founders of the first department of Performance Studies, at New York University in 1980, editor of TDR The Drama

Review, and artistic director of The Performance Group 1967-1980³³). Turner observed and wrote of performance workshops and rehearsals directed by Schechner in the early 1980s (Turner 1982:93). This writing represents a sustained attempt to theorise studio-based practices. My observation and writing of dance workshops and rehearsals follows Turner's lead of scholarly attention to performance-making processes, albeit not in the role of anthropologist.

In Turner's descriptions from the early 1980s that positioned theatre practice within a widened, sociological definition of performance in relation to the then critical situation of anthropology, I on occasion nonetheless experience a triggered insight into dance-making situations as I have observed them. I might for example wish to recognize a fit between Turner's description of "*spontaneous* *communitas*" and my studio observation of choreographer Rosemary Lee, whilst also acknowledging that, as a general, nominalised category, *communitas* has limited extension to a practitioner-focused, speculative enquiry:

[A] moment when compatible people – friends, congeners – obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level [...] Individuals who interact with one another in the mode of spontaneous *communitas* become totally absorbed into a single synchronised, fluid event. (Turner 1982:48)

In the writings of other dance practitioners I also seem to recognize something that might metaphorically be termed *communitas*. Kirsty Alexander, for example, in the paper cited previously, wrote of "Skinner releasing" work as involving 'an intuition of universal connection which is accessed through a state of heightened awareness' (Alexander 2003:21). Sylvie Fortin, during the same conference in which Alexander spoke, alluded to the somatic work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and Emilie Conrad Da'Oud as involving experiences which seem related to what Turner termed *communitas*: 'being present with ourselves, connecting with our cellular breathing, our internal rhythms and our ancestral wisdom' (Fortin 2003:3) (all of which might be deemed "unhearable" by a post-structuralist schooled scholar):

When practicing somatics, I sometimes get an incredible feeling of being at home, of being so peaceful [...] In these moments, the boundary line fades out and I experience unity, compassion, and love. (Fortin 2003:4)

Turner commented himself of a theatre workshop that its 'disciplines and ordeals are aimed at generating *communitas* or something like it in the group' (Turner 1982:119) and related his concept to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *flow* theory, to which Rosemary

Lee has also referred when reflecting on her dance and choreographic practice³⁴.

Communitas, unlike flow, 'at its inception is evidently between or among individuals – it is what all of us believe we share' (Turner 1982:58) and so might support an enquiry into dance-making as a relational, multi-participant process. Turner's work, does not however, open my understanding of *how* Lee skilfully facilitates a dance workshop such that something that she might identify by terms such as flow or communitas is experienced by dancers and by which she may judge a rehearsal as productive.

Practice-as-research in Dance and Performance Studies

The first move in legitimating a new approach is to claim it has an object of study, preferably an important one, that has previously escaped notice.
(Rabinow 1996:37)

Dance scholar Ruth Way observed in 2000 that there is in performance scholarship 'currently a renewed commitment to develop an understanding of the creative processes in which choreographers/artists engage to facilitate their choreographic work' (Way 2000:51). As was argued in my Introduction, the present enquiry has emerged from and is symptomatic of a present climate of scholarly interest in the working processes of professional artists. I propose here to examine more closely some examples of research that would seem to aim at a performance practice focus, beginning with Way's paper from which the above quotation was drawn. For the paper, Way interviewed British choreographer Yolande Snaith and described herself as attentive, as I have aimed to be with other choreographers, to the 'sensibilities which nurture and inspire [Snaith's] creative processes and choreographic practice' (Way 2000:51).

Way, as I am, was focused upon a choreographer's account; I would be cautious, however, of describing my research as she did as 'attempting to reveal her [*a choreographer's*] practice' (Way 2000:51). The verb "to reveal" might suggest an ambition to unveil a hidden truth of practice to either or both reader and artist. Is the artist unaware of her modes of working, so requiring that they be interpretatively revealed to her by a spectator-critic? Or is the artist's practice revealed to readers, without for the artist any epistemic gain? As argued in the section *In Proximity*, the present research aims at reciprocal knowledge gains for choreographer and researcher

from a process of focusing on a choreographer's account, reflecting and elaborating on that account in dialogue so perhaps producing at times qualitative modulations to that practitioner's understanding of her working practice. In spite of its practice-focused aspiration, I would suggest that Way's paper nonetheless objectified the person and choreographer practice of Snaith by how Way framed their conversation such that an element named 'Yolande Snaith's Theatredance' became thematised in service of a broader argument which gave the paper its title, 'collaborative practice and the phenomenal dancer'.

Jennifer Jackson, in the paper cited earlier, also used the verb 'reveal' when she observed her frustration in producing writing focused on her dance practice: 'I cannot simultaneously represent all the ideas and processes that are revealed in one moment of dancing' (Jackson 2005:26). Her paper reiterated the challenge that faces the present research of 'communicating the experiences from the perspective of practical knowledge of the 'how' and 'why' of those processes and ideas' (Jackson 2005:26). Importantly for the present research she recognised that her frustration was due in part to the fact that '[d]ance's capacity to seem to *reveal* is constitutively *relational*' with respect to spectators (Jackson 2005:26).

If recent dance scholarship (particularly in dance education) evidences increasing concern with the working processes of dance practitioners, much of that research is of limited applicability to the present enquiry. Doug Risner (2000) for example noted that 'how dancers make sense, create meaning, learn, and know these dances often goes without interrogation' (Risner 2000:155) and drew instead, in an approach similar to my own, on interviews with dancers, their studio journals and his observations as a choreographer in rehearsal. He did not give a reflective account, however, of the ethical, affective relationship with the dancers who were at the core of his enquiry despite the fact that they were student-dancers for whom he was also a tutor. I would question then in knowledge-political terms the confidence with which Risner described methodologically how 'broad interview questions were used as a springboard to allow the dancers to speak candidly about themselves [and] the rehearsal process' (Risner 2000:160).

Risner's enquiry differs from the present research which is concerned with expert rather than student dance-makers. Insights into expertise may be drawn from fields other than performance. Arran Caza, a doctoral student at the University of

Michigan business school, for example, is preparing research into the intersection of individual expertise and group interdependence through studying the development and realization of performance excellence in interdependent contexts such as work teams. Caza proposes to draw upon Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (which might be translated as the practical wisdom to act well) to argue that expertise might be theorised not only in terms of *episteme* and *techné* but of *phronesis*, which he describes as 'an action-oriented concept, associated with doing the correct thing in a given situation, and is often characterized as wise deliberation' (Caza, statement of research interests, accessed 24/6/06, and correspondence with the author 29/6/06). An expert, then, is able to 'achieve phronesis and to take the correct action at the correct time'. Caza proposes furthermore to highlight the role of the 'nontraditional, arational bases of expertise, including intuition, tacit knowledge, and virtue, and how these are influenced by interdependence'.

A commitment to understanding the creative processes of expert performance-makers that Way (2000) noted is frequently an element of the research imperative for those practitioner-researchers who conduct their research within an institutional framework known increasingly as "practice as research" (as briefly examined in the Introduction). Angela Piccini traced for the PARIP project (Practice As Research In Performance) at Bristol University a history of the institutional validation of "practice as research" in the UK from 1992, with the first full Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) (to assess the quality of research in UK universities and guide the allocation of public funds) thereafter four or five yearly (www.rae.ac.uk). Piccini noted the working groups convened in 1994 and 1998 by the Standing Conference on University Drama Departments (SCUDD, www.scudd.org.uk) to influence the RAE panel research definitions, and the definitions of research given by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, formed in 1998 (replaced in 2005 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, www.ahrc.ac.uk). Piccini's paper summarized the difficulties entailed by 'the *de facto* institutional acceptance of practice running ahead of the various institutions' attempts to quantify, set up guidelines and develop best practices' (Piccini, working paper, last edited 2002, www.bris.ac.uk/parip).

If Piccini was surveying institutional frameworks for "practice as research", individually practitioner-researchers negotiate their situations. Carol Brown, for example, described at a PARIP conference (2003:1) how the 'core activity of my

research is the making, writing, construction, production and touring of choreographies'. She charted her movement:

[F]rom theoretically-informed practice, to performance as research. That is, from research which is predominantly about establishing a dialogue between theory and practice, to a performance practice which itself embodies a space of encounter for action and ideas. (Brown 2003:2)

Anna Pakes noted in 2003 that to date there had also been 'little sustained philosophical investigation of practice as research in the public domain' (Pakes 2003:129). Pakes' own writing, she has argued, 'begin[s] to explore epistemological issues surrounding dance practice presented as research' (Pakes 2003:129) and has examined the interventions by which a work of "practice as research" will not 'be seen "simply" as art' (Pakes 2004). (I note here that my present enquiry is not concerned, as Pakes is, with a distinction between professional art-making and institutional models of practice as research, but enquires instead from the premise that expert choreographers may theorise in and as professional artmaking, as argued by Melrose (for example 2005c). Pakes herself observed that the 'creation and performance of dance, theatre or music have increasingly come to be recognized as forms of research in their own right' (Pakes 2003:127)).

Drawing on the writing of mid to late 20th century philosophers concerned with the relation of practical reasoning and knowledge that follows from Aristotle's discussion of the *practical syllogism*, Pakes examined the epistemological viability of "practice as research" (Pakes 2004). Where theoretical knowledge is judged by criteria of truth or falsity, Pakes observed that practical knowledge appears as 'an awareness of how best to act, a form of insight embodied in what we do in the world' (Pakes 2004). Artistic action might therefore be construed as 'itself the embodiment of knowledge [...] underwritten by a logic that emerges in and through the activity itself'³⁵[...and that] neither requires theoretical explanation nor functions to illustrate insights acquired theoretically: rather, it is in itself intelligent' (Pakes 2004). Pakes (2003:135) noted that any requirement of a practitioner-researcher to produce a verbal commentary or explanation had been contested by "embodied" theory, citing Rye (2001) on 'the production of embodied knowledge which can not, by definition, be embedded, reproduced or demonstrated in any recorded document'.

Notably, given my references to Caza's studies in psychology and business into expertise and phronesis, Pakes took up a suggestion from philosopher David Carr

(1999a and 1999b) that ‘contemporary art making both depends upon and has the potential to develop a form of phronetic insight’ (Pakes 2004). She defined *phronesis* as a ‘disposition to laudable action, grounded in sensitivity to particular situations and circumstances[...] *phronesis* eschews generalisation, objective detachment and instrumentality’ (Pakes 2004). A practitioner-researcher might be able to conceptualise as a mode of *phronesis*, her or his ‘creative sensitivity to others participating in the process, to the materials at hand and to the evolving situation’:

[D]ecisions are not generally made in accordance with a technically rational view of how to achieve a pre-conceived effect. Rather, they arise out of the circumstances of the moment and are governed by a different, more flexible kind of rationality, sensitive to contingencies. (Pakes 2004)

As Pakes analysed it, the possibility of phronetic insight requires that artmaking be conceived of ‘as a form of intentional action, of which the cognitive value lies in the reasoned decision-making of the artist as agent’ (Pakes 2004). (She observed difficulties of this definition with respect to artworks that are not performed, to which one might respond with a widened conception of performativity (as proposed by Jones & Stephenson 1999, Kosofsky Sedgwick and Parker 1995)). Pakes was however dissatisfied with her intentional action model of “practice as research” in that it ‘seems to place too much emphasis on artistic purposes and not enough on the process’s outcome, the artwork’ (Pakes 2004). The basis for Pakes’ reservation however seems to default to a spectator’s position which appears to me to be at odds with her previously practitioner-focused account of phronetic insight, which might better be accommodated to an epistemic model of ongoing practice (Melrose 2005c, Knorr Cetina 2001:182) but is in line with her argument as to the viability and value of practice as research, and allows her to theorise how knowledge in practice as research projects can be disseminated to a research community.

The hermeneutic perspective [...] posits an artwork’s transformation into structure as making insight available to a much wider community, which includes general audiences as well as artworld experts. This moves us away from a preoccupation with artistic intentions, and towards a deep engagement with artworks as such. The latter cease to be an illustration or by-product of the artist’s knowledge-generative process or thinking, and become structures in their own right whose value resides in their transcendence of the individual’s intentional action. (Pakes 2004)

The argument of the present research is that there is more at stake philosophically in a practitioner-focused enquiry into dance-making than ‘a preoccupation with artistic

intentions'. My conviction is that such a practitioner-focused enquiry cannot be superseded by a spectator's 'deep engagement with artworks as such [...]whose value resides in their transcendence of the individual's intentional action' since the modes, skills and expert knowledge of such an engagement are epistemically distinct. The present research is not focused on the aesthetic value of any individual artwork but with a practitioner's perspective of the 'considerable overlap and interconnectedness between creations which might collectively be viewed as a going process through which a range of questions flow' (Brown 2003:4). Pakes' trajectory then in the papers cited would seem to be at variance with the present research; however her research is significant to the present enquiry because it importantly marked a move in dance scholarship towards serious consideration of "research into practice" and the work of practitioner-researchers. The increasing prominence of a "practice as research" paradigm in performance studies is perhaps indicated by how when, in January of this year, PARIP circulated a call for proposals for a working group on "performance as research", their announcement used the terms "performance research" and "performance as research" apparently interchangeably (email to PARIP discussion list, 20/1/2006)³⁶.

Current practitioner-focused initiatives in dance scholarship

This chapter has surveyed the emergence of Dance Studies in order to situate within a dance disciplinary frame my formation as a researcher and the practice-focused aspiration and methodologies of this doctorate. My aim has been to respond to Melrose's question as to 'how might the expertise of the artist be viewed in academic contexts which focus on creative and performing arts, but largely from the positions and presuppositions of an expert spectating – a spectating which also takes the production of writing as its primary objective?' (Melrose 2005d:182). It remains to comment on research published over the course of the present study which I might argue has aimed to view creative expertise from the position of the artist concerned.

In the field of dance education, doctoral student Kerry Chappell (2003) has aimed 'to illuminate specialist dance teachers' practice through rigorous academic research, which can complement the current body of knowledge built on dance teachers' personal experiences' (Chappell 2003:38). Chappell's research is of interest to the present study by its focus on specialist knowledges of dance practitioners, however the aspiration to "illuminate" would seem to presuppose that the researcher in

some way already has some means of secure access to their knowledge whereas my enquiry has had to proceed more speculatively (observe the movement from ‘personal experiences’ to the ‘rigorous academic research’ proposed). Unlike the present study, Chappell situated her research within a framework of qualitative social science, specifically of research into creativity in education which produces a contrasted trajectory of enquiry.

The question of the relations of performance practices and writing practices has been a concern for director, playwright and scholar Simon Jones who has commented on the difficulties for a spectator of writing in response to performance (referred to previously Introduction) (Jones 2003). He contrasted a scientific *writing-up* (a blueprint which both records a process of enquiry and allows for future verification of the results in independent trials) to “*writing-alongside*” performance as ‘a singularity that draws attention to another kind of singularity about which it can say nothing.’ Jones’ words draw philosophically on the question of *de re* and *de dicto* (a question underscoring my overall research) which Gilles Deleuze returned to in writing of Michel Foucault’s work:

As long as we stick to things and words we can believe that we are speaking of what we see, that we see what we are speaking of [...] But as soon as we open up words and things, as soon as we discover statements and visibilities’ we find ‘a visible element that can only be seen, an articulable element that can only be spoken. (Deleuze 1986: 65)

Moving from a spectating perspective to that of a practitioner-researcher, Jones ruefully observed that ‘strictly speaking, the artist and the scholar cannot agree with each other, even if embodied by the same person’ because of their differentiated activities (Jones 2003). Jones negotiated this apparent rupture by citing, as I have in *In Proximity*, the writing of Arkady Plotnitsky on *complementarity* (1994): ‘[o]ur greatest challenge,’ Jones concluded, ‘is to find ways’:

of *housing the mix* of performative and textual practices alongside each other. As performance as a research activity must work at the limits of any known field, where the risk of disintegration and disorganization is greatest, so the incorporating of this within the academy threatens the very regulations that permit that institution to persist, namely to determine what is proper to it. (Jones 2003)

The development of writing theorised and attempted by this thesis represents one attempt at “housing the mix”.

Richard Huw Morgan of the Welsh performance company Good Cop Bad Cop asserted, also at the PARIP 2003 conference, that '[o]nly when we have a clear understanding of the research methodologies of established practitioners, can the academy [...] say that 'Practice as Research' within the academy is, or is not, at odds with the reality of its object of study outside its walls' (Morgan 2003). The present research works to meet the paucity of scholarly understanding identified by Morgan as to what 'the research practice of an established professional practitioner look[s] like'. My enquiry has, as Morgan proposed, sought the perspective of established professional practitioners, continuing a process he began when he offered observations about his own practice prior to his appointment as a research fellow; before he was, as he phrased it, 'touched' by academia (although it is unclear whether he made and wrote these observations before his appointment).

Morgan structured his observations as a list: 'A performance is always part of a process and not the end of the process'; 'A performance is always provisional, even in its live manifestation'; 'A performance consists of what is not presented as well as what is present'. The direct, manifesto-like clarity of each definition, 'a performance is...' works to suggest that a resolution to the contested discourses of "practice as research" may be possible by "simple" recourse to artists who work outside of those discourses. However, although Morgan has called for 'a clear understanding' of how professional performance-makers work, his own account may also be characterised by qualities of withholding (see also *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'*): 'Though we may spend time in a studio or rehearsal room, there is no guarantee that we will be studying or rehearsing. Though we may jot down ideas, there is no guarantee that we will ever read them or act upon what has been written' (Morgan 2003). It would appear then that the aspiration to an understanding of artists' practices cannot be readily met, on the evidence of Morgan's own responses, if one 'ask a practitioner'.

Morgan's determination to question practitioners might seem to be taken up in a curious publication by Theater Instituut Nederland entitled *Why all these questions?* which contains a series of tear-out cards addressed to choreographers seemingly to prompt reflection and dialogue (although the writing modes enact an interrogation that might be sensed as intrusive and patronizing to an established performance practitioner). For example: 'Why is it interesting for you to work with this medium?' 'How can you realise what is in your head?' 'Imagine you are a painter: what do and don't you want to have on the canvas?' (Smeets 2002, unpaginated). The book was

developed from a dialogue project that brought together a group of young dance makers and mentors in intensive dialogue in Frankfurt in 2002 and also contains photographs of the artists, framing articles, transcribed conversations between the participants and performance photographs. While questions were asked of the dance-makers, it appears to me from the book that was one outcome, that the motivation was to challenge and enable choreographic development, which could not be my motivation for questioning the mature choreographers with whom I have worked in the present research. For example, one artist commented that he chose a certain soundtrack because the music was “beautiful”:

A storm of indignation broke out. Beautiful? Beautiful? How could he who wanted to substantially account for all the other means used, offer the word ‘beautiful’? [...] The artist listened, scratched his head, shuffled in his chair. A silence fell. Then he said, looking outside, ‘I realise I haven’t actually given much thought to the connection with the subject, I have made a purely aesthetic choice’. The insight visibly surprised and irritated him. (Smeets 2002:93-94)

Frustratingly for my enquiry, the published interviews tend to record practitioners’ responses with only generalised references to their creative practices. For example, one artist Alice Chauchat commented that:

During the work on the form the idea also changes. Then you have to negotiate, to reconsider, rework, add, omit, until you have the feeling that now you are doing what you wanted to do. (Smeets 2002:103)

Her partner in the conversation artist Tino Sehgal, responded that:

I never change the idea during the work process. The time I spend on, for instance, a choreography is aimed at characterizing the idea even more, to differentiate, to have more layers in the dramaturgy that refer to the original idea. (Smeets 2002:103)

Without documentation of Chauchat or Sehgal’s choreographic processes, I can only observe of their encounter that choreographers differ markedly over the priorities that they describe in their processes. Their processes may not have seemed so at odds were they to have drawn on observations of one another’s practices. On the basis of this encounter I cannot know even if “idea”, referred to by both, has any equivalence in their studio practices. In an ironised reading, the title *Why all these questions?* might become an artist’s response to the enquiries of scholars and others.

The present chapter has been concerned with the historical development of dance studies in the UK and the impact of “textualising” approaches drawn from poststructuralist practices of cultural theory dominant in the humanities in British universities from the 1970s. I have reflected on the consequences to the present enquiry of what Melrose, with respect to the work of Peter Osborne (2000), has described as a relative inattention to the professional experience, skills and expertise of performance-makers (for example, Hunt & Melrose 2005:71) that has continued to the present day despite the emergence of practitioner-oriented enquiries influenced by phenomenological philosophy, Laban studies, diverse somatic disciplines and a research model that has emerged over the last 15 years which is variously known in dance and performance studies as “practice as research”. This chapter has sought to survey current research in dance and performance which as Judith Carroll (2004) wrote, ‘places the artist at the centre of inquiry rather than the work’³⁷.

The chapter that follows builds from the survey of the present chapter to make a methodological argument; in light of the observed paucity to date of expert dance practitioner-focused writing, I will propose the possibility of formal writing, premised on a hypothesis of practitioner-based knowledge of performance-making (that is in acknowledging that a practitioner’s knowledge relation may be to a work conceived of as still worked-on, conjectured and subject to contingency, whereas a spectator might rather conceive the work as finished, its effects deliberated) which might be developed through collaboration between a choreographer and a researcher-writer as studio observer.

Research companions

Two extracts from widely cited published works will be adopted here as research companions to the review in the present chapter of dance and performance scholarship. The first is an extract from Matthew Goulish's *39 Microlectures: in proximity of performance* (2000) and the second from Tim Etchells' *Certain Fragments: contemporary performance and Forced Entertainment* (1999). I propose to engage with and so reconfigure these authors' writing from the perspective of the literature review (above) which enquired into how and to what extent performance practices and the knowledge perspectives of its practitioners are approached by what we have identified as expert-spectating-based disciplinary formations which constitute a major area within Dance and Performance Studies. I have selected writing from Etchells and Goulish as "research companions" for this chapter since they are both performance-makers whose performance work and writings enjoy a high regard in university departments, particularly within frameworks of practice-based research or practice as research.

Both extracts of writing differently thematise process from an expert-practitioner perspective. They have prompted me to consider performance-making practices and those writing practices which, as mine do, aim at a productive relation to certain aspects of performance-making. Plainly there is an established relation of scholarly writing and performance-making with which this thesis is not otherwise concerned, but which was laconically noted by director, playwright and performance scholar Simon Jones as posing a predicament for university-based practitioner-researchers required to provide evidence of their research outputs: if we were to follow Phelan's writing on performance ephemerality (1993), viewed at least from the perspective of expert spectating and writing, someone engaged in "practice as research" 'has nothing to show for their work the morning after the performance' (Jones 2003).

I cited Jones' critique, in knowledge-political terms, of much scholarly writing "of" performance with the argument that a 'coming to know performance through writing about performance is only ever *a writing alongside*'. As no more than "writing alongside", my aim - of producing scholarly writing that engages, reflects or otherwise relates to a practitioner's knowledge and practices of performance-making - is strictly curtailed. I might draw more encouragement for my project however from

anthropologist Paul Rabinow who once described how he had thought to characterize a series of essays as ‘para-ethnographic (para, from the Greek “beside”)’. He concluded however that the Greek *dia* was a more accurate prefix since its range of meanings indicated ‘a more active and processural’ range of meanings (Rabinow 1996:ix). Following Rabinow, I propose therefore to conceptualise and develop writing that might be conceived of as ‘throughout (temporal), across, through (something), between or after’ performance-making (Rabinow 1996:ix).

2nd “research companion”: Matthew Goulish’s *39 Microlectures: in proximity of performance*

Matthew Goulish’s *39 Microlectures: in proximity of performance* (2000) is on more than one count of potential value to my enquiry into questions of practitioner-writing of performance-making. Goulish, of the Chicago-based collaborative performance group Goat Island, is well-respected for his practitioner-writing of and in devised performance. (For information about Goat Island and for bibliography and documentation of their work, see www.goatlandperformance.org). My direct knowledge of Goat Island is based on their performance readings at Nightwalking, a ResCen conference and performance event in 2002 that investigated artists’ practices. The existence of the substantial publication of Goulish’s writings by the typically academic Routledge, together with Goat Island’s production of collaborative lectures or talks as a company indicate a reflective engagement with artistic practices, if not in the university-led ‘practice as research’ debates. I would judge Goulish’s writing to be based in his expertise as both writer and as performance maker, and as academic writer and teacher.

I was drawn by two elements of Goulish’s title, that is, ‘microlectures’ and ‘in proximity of performance’. The publication of a lecture series is a format so familiar in academia that it is rarely directly announced in its title, unless it is to announce a series on the same topic (for example, Rushkins’s *Lectures on art*, or Margolis’ *What, after all, is a work of art?: lectures in the philosophy of art.*) Goulish, however, emphasised that these are lectures, albeit micro, a fact more prominent than their ostensible ‘subject’ – or at least, location - ‘in proximity of performance’. (The final noun, after

all, is an idealisation that signals the loss of the event of the performance.) Goulish's apparent invention of a new genre, the "microlecture," is a novel intervention in the field of 'practice as research' suggesting a lecture, in micro-form, but raising expectation that it will be marked by its features as verbal performance; delivered in a pedagogical setting, typically edifying, learned in register and serious in intent. Echoing the typographical layout of student guides, each of Goulish's 'microlectures' is delineated by headings and subheadings into multiple brief sections although these do not indicate, synoptically, an unfolding argument, so much as mark boundaries between semi-discrete 'micro' texts, nested and cross-set into patterns of coincidence and juxtaposition.

My responses to Goulish's *39 Microlectures* will focus on how he seems to me to have adopted an outsider's stance to the book as knowledge apparatus: for example, 'what is a book?' is the title of the second microlecture; source notes he described as gathered not as a scholarly chore but as 'a creative way of tracking "the movement of thought"' (Goulish 2000, citing Grafton 1997). Whereas I might draw guidance from Burrows and Ritsema's writing (2003, discussed in the Introduction) precisely by the extent that it has little in common with a conventional journal article, Goulish's published writing could provide a model for me by its contrastive strategy of writing metadiscursively within scholarly forms.

In the fourth microlecture, entitled 'What is an introduction?' Goulish recounted how he had arrived at his title for the book:

[M]y new found editor suggested that I call it *39 Microlectures about performance*. I did not think the writing was really about performance. It wasn't *about* anything. Concerning aboutness, it seemed to me the microlectures circled around topics, and never discussed them directly, while always staying in the neighbourhood of performance. (Goulish 2000:17)

Goulish's writing may be an apt companion for me to draw into the present research undertaking by how it records his reflections on how writing might relate to performance practices. Goulish seems to have conceived of his writing not with an active role of 'about performance'; rather, writing is defined as lying within the extent of 'performance'. The geographic metaphor does however elide the predicament of *res/verba*, of how the economies and practices of 'performance' and 'writing' might be sufficiently similar or analogical, or equivalent order to relate *proximally*.

The first microlecture

Where an “academic” text might be expected to begin with an introduction outlining its main themes, approach and argument, Goulish’s first microlecture, entitled ‘1. To the Reader – 1’, offers idiosyncratic reading guidelines: ‘Put it down, and read something else’ or ‘Start anywhere: stop anywhere [...] Read one line repeatedly for two days.’ Robust participation, it seems, is expected of the reader. Goulish’s direct address, it seems to me, may work to bring a reader to what Rosemary Lee, working with dancers in a workshop, might describe as a ‘receptive state’ (Lee et al 2002) which encourages participants into a focused, highly responsive state, ready to begin working creatively and collaboratively. The invitation, ‘please take your time’, for example, proposes a reflective pace for the reader (not leisurely – too many options are being fired) in which one is alert to inclination and invention, beyond schooled and passively receptive habits. But who might this reader be, and what is she required/permitted to do?

In these opening lines, I seem to hear a light-hearted adoption of a kindly, avuncular persona, a pop psychologist offering self-help. Yet the guidance may be an illusion. If conventional reading practices such as ‘start at the beginning’ or ‘don’t peek ahead’, guide a reader to produce certain narratives of sense, what sense might be made without them? ‘Do whatever you need to with this book’ the reader is invited, which might be, for example, to ignore at will any structuring of reading proposed by the text’s internal organisation, to interpolate other reading positions (and which I might take as license for the present adoption of extracts from his writing as “research companion”). What becomes of Goulish’s conventional relationship with the notion of and relationships specific to the performance event – its eventness? And there is a risk: ‘Do whatever you need to with this book, and, if possible, do not let it damage your thoughts’.

Literary writers have sometimes gone to considerable lengths to influence their readers’ interpretations; celebrated examples include the introduction to Defoe’s *Journal of a Plague Year* or Charlotte Brontë’s preface to her sister Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. Goulish’s address reminds me a little of these, but perhaps more so of the wilful contrariness of a play prologue (from Ben Jonson, as I remember) in which a character in the meta-theatrical role of playwright dryly instructs the audience of the economics of exchange, on which basis they should heckle only according to the

value that they paid for their ticket. What is ‘beyond value’ and lost however, in this particular instance, is performance ‘itself’, and the highly particular relationships and modes of participation that are not only constitutive to it, but arguably basic to many readers’ interest in Goulish’s writing.

Whereas the present research is concerned with questions of writing in relation to performance-making, Goulish’s first microlecture appears concerned rather with modes of reading and with how one might respond to the page as site of performance. ‘Read this book as a creative act’ I am urged (although criteria for the ways we might understand the latter are not given) perhaps alluding to theories of meaning production from literary studies, for example, as an expression of ‘reader-response’ or ‘reception theory’ (see, for example, Iser and Fish, in Lodge 1988), acknowledging the work a reader might undertake in sense-making. Yet it may also - or alternatively -invite ludic, productive reading practices. Use of terms like ‘creative’ here might be notional (and/or political) rather than philosophically charged. In exploring modes of artists’ writing, my own attention to how that writing might be read is limited by the question of a mode of reading implicitly proposed and constrained by strategies specific to the writing itself. While I might be concerned for example with the representational implications, for the work of the performance-maker, of an impressionistic or hypertextual writing, and for the ways in which it prompts shifts in conventional, print-technology reading practices, I do not propose to examine more conventionally experimental writing or reading practices, such as applying cut-up or chance techniques, unless I judge these writing strategies to be useful to this particular writing project.

Goulish and Etchells both - if differently - raise the issue of creativity in written accounts of performance-making. By contrast, my own position is that I am frequently *not* a member of the artistic team for the performance-making that my writing considers. It would be inappropriate, and not only in ethical terms, for my writing to claim a degree of identity with the performance-work. Furthermore, the training in research writing that this dissertation results from is ‘academic’ – that is, concerned amongst other aspects, with the evidential status of data transcribed and communicated. It follows that I am doubtful of the grounds for identifying my own writing or reading as creative – except, perhaps, to the extent that academic writing itself can be identified as ‘creative’ or ‘inventive’ in its tactics (see Melrose 2005c).

However Rosemary Lee has said that she regards some of our co-authored writing processes as relating creatively to her choreographic processes.

Goulish's introduction continues, 'I did not intend this book to [...] become a book at all. I intended to pull together thoughts that I considered important' (Goulish 2000:3). Given the intricate structuring and ordering of the microlectures that follow, there may be a degree of self-deprecation and equivocation on Goulish's part, of 'judge me as an artist not the academic I also am'. On the other hand, with Goulish's words in mind, I do 'feel encouraged' as he seems to have wished the reader to feel.

The microlecture soon shifts register to evoke (briefly) a postmodern cultural-philosophical discourse: 'You read a sentence that you may have read before. You may conclude that we live in an accelerated time. Sometimes time itself seems to threaten to disappear' (Goulish 2000:3). The source notes identify the latter phrase as Goulish's first explicit borrowing from another writer, in this case a modified quote from Kathy Acker (1997). Is it coincidental that with this borrowing I hear Goulish turning from gentle preamble to the start of a microlecture proper? Quickly, though, he takes the writing back to its previous track of introducing what he explains to be his strategy of recycling texts. The notion that 'time itself seems to threaten to disappear' resonates, it appears to me, through other microlectures in references, for example, to Rip Van Winkle and the atom bomb.

In the last paragraph of the microlecture, Goulish makes his first direct reference to performance in lines that are themselves performance-conscious, scenic and cadenced: 'Consider this book like an interrupted performance. The writer left the stage [...] the writer will not return. I have been asked to stand in. Thank you for this distinction and this honour' (Goulish 2000:4). Where conventionally 'learned' styles of address continue in the most part to depersonalize writer and reader (compare, however, the re-personalising in Phelan 1993), Goulish's writer persona might be judged to be eagerly present, seeking out a reader and calling for involvement as if to 'de-write' himself as writing subject.

Goulish's writing has emphasised, as I judge it, the performances of acts of writing and reading as my writing with choreographers has perhaps tended not until recently. 'Consider this book like an interrupted performance'; the writer would be "on stage", except that in this instance there seems to be a "stand-in", that is one who cannot answer for what has been written. What does this scene "stand in" for – what,

for example, might Goulish have written had he not used a fictionalising frame? Or is writing to be understood as an inadequate stand-in for an explicitly theatrical performance? ('That other writer, that other performance [...] – that was the necessary one.')

'2. What is a book?'

The second microlecture begins with the statement, 'Existence is not infinity, but that which allows the existant to be thought of as deriving from infinity' (Goulish 2000:5). The tenor is ontologising, "is not". Checking this against the Source Notes reveals that this is a modified quotation from Gilles Deleuze's philosophical writings (Deleuze 1993). This statement is succeeded by the signpost, 'For example', and an extended autobiographical anecdote which recalls, to me at least with performance writing in mind, the opening paragraphs of Peggy Phelan's *Mourning Sex*: 'I was once nineteen years old and kneeling on the floor in a library in Kalamazoo, Michigan [...]' (Goulish 2000:5) in which he reflected that, given his geographical distance from performance (growing up in the US mid-west in the 1960s and 1970s), the only proximity to performance he could achieve was through published photographs. Goulish's anecdote may trigger recognition for a reader who might not have seen Goat Island's performances but who might have the expectation that they will in some way encounter that performance work through Goulish's writing. It is notable then, that for Goulish's reader, photographs are not provided.

Quotation

A key problem in my overall research project lies in the means or ways in which I situate the writing of performance-making processes within a domain which includes a wider range of theoretical discourses, and in particular the means by which I might seek to support an argument through reference to theoretical discourses - for example, the philosophical registers produced in and as part of a scriptural economy, rather than action-focussed performance-making ones, produced by performance-makers. A key question emerges: to what extent can these other (historically- and discipline-specific) discourses be identified as tools to the end of producing practice-focused observations? Might it be argued that such citations are notional tags (Melrose, in conversation June 2006), rather than systematic references, on the basis of which claims might be made

for dance-making as '(practice as) research' in terms of the way it apparently pursues a project of philosophical (writing) research?

Goulish's continual inclusion of quotation, marked or not, literal or modified, appears a rather different approach. The brief philosophical statement and register used open his microlecture, rather than being introduced later to lend the authority of a 'theoretical' register to a description of performance-making. His telling of a personal anecdote as example to the abstract philosophical statement establishes it as an act of meta-autobiography. His example is a parodic set-piece from a 'life of the artist' – growing up remote from the metropolis and finding his epiphany of all that is the future ('This is something new, I thought.' Goulish 2000:5) at the bottom of a library box of back-copies.

Goulish's anecdote included a paragraph triggered by what seems to have functioned for him as *punctum* (Barthes 1980) in a detail of a dilapidated lift. Turning to the Source Notes I realise that Goulish has quoted from architect Rem Koolhaas (1996). Goulish has attributed his borrowing meticulously in the Source Notes but does not interrupt the microlecture to mark that he is quoting another author. The compositional approach reminds me of, for example, poet TS Eliot's use of quotation in 'The Wasteland'. What did citing Koolhaas' words enable Goulish to do in his microlecture? What would not have been achieved if Goulish had named Koolhaas directly?

'4. What is an introduction?' and '4.1 X and questions (introduction to the introduction)'

The naming of a microlecture, 'What is an introduction?' and parenthetically 'introduction to the introduction' seems to me to participate, as ironic pedantry, in the writing-persona suggested earlier, of artist conscientiously and curiously, encountering the structures of academic writing as a foreign culture. Although named, 'introduction to the introduction', this passage functions rather as a post-note while including material that might conventionally be expected in an introduction:

For some time I have written very short talks on various subjects. I refer to these talks as microlectures. By the time I was 37 years old, I had coincidentally compiled 37 microlectures. (Goulish 2000:17)

The narrative of how his book came to be published - for example his correspondence with his editor about the content of the introduction - is less conventionally 'relevant'. These details of the academic economy of writing and publication might well be generally considered mundane and incidental, not to be reported in the form of a scholarly book, if the latter aims to be timeless and supra-personal in its authority. Goulish offered the following as explanation of his book's strapline:

I thought of a young film director I had met in college, who had become a commercial success by making low-budget horror films in Detroit. Early in his Hollywood career, a producer said to him, "If you want a really big hit, you need to have an X in the title". (Goulish 2000:17)

I read Goulish's persona as one of seeming innocence whereby to comment on and so unravel the deliberation and seriousness expected of an academic book title. The wit is low-key; as he tells it, he has followed advice to 'have an X in the title'. Quirkily applied, this 'X' of commercial success destabilises the tacit assumption that disinterested reason and authority underpin decisions about publication.

Goulish's writing continues with another ironical set-piece of autobiography, that of the author coming to writing – in this case, at school, 'when I wrote a short report on earthworms' (a choice which, when recounted in a microlecture, may knowingly perform the cultural paradigm of eccentric performance artist choosing unlikely materials for art-making). Having copied out a section of the encyclopaedia, he described how 'The teacher told me I had to rewrite the paragraph in my own words. I didn't at that time have any words that I considered my own' (Goulish 2000:18). Goulish (although not a fictional invention as such) seems to me to have narrativised himself by adopting the literary trope of a child figure perceptive of social contradictions to which adults are oblivious (exemplified in the character of the Little Prince created by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry). This anecdote appears to me as one of several in Goulish's text in which he thematised his own misunderstandings and admission to the scriptural economy so putting his own authority in question (as abjection, an attempt to pre-empt criticism?)

On these sorts of bases, making a critical analysis of Goulish's 39 *Microlectures* feels inappropriate. If I continue here to examine forms, strategies and structures that Goulish employs, I may ignore the emotive force of his writing. I am motivated, "encouraged" as he suggested, by Goulish's text, but doubtful of how his writing could guide my own collaborative writing with performance-makers which has

not aimed at the emotive investment that I perceive in his writing. I find Goulish's writing to be strikingly personal, saturated by his cultural, aesthetic and political interests and values, that is by what it seems he considers to impassion and drive him creatively: 'In proximity of performance' then, not as writing 'about' performance, but as the proximity of performance to a professional-personal performance-maker's life.

3rd "research companion": Tim Etchells' *Certain Fragments: contemporary performance and Forced Entertainment*

Etchells is writer and Artistic Director of the widely-acclaimed Forced Entertainment, a Sheffield-based performance group founded in 1984 and committed, according to its website, to 'challenging and provocative art – to work that asks questions and fuels dreams'. (For information about Forced Entertainment and for bibliography and documentation of their work, see www.forced.co.uk). Striking against the scarcity of published extended writing by contemporary performance-practitioners, Etchells' long list of publications includes *The Dream Dictionary (for the Modern Dreamer)* (2001) and *Endland Stories* (1999) together with contributions to *Performance Research* and influential collections such as *Shattered Anatomies* (Heathfield 1997) and *A Split Second of Paradise* (Childs & Walwin 1998).

Etchells' published bibliography here seems to me to suggest a significant awareness of and participation on the edges of the processes of academic publishing. Forced Entertainment, funded mainly by the Arts Council of England, worked on the edges of university culture through connections with Andrew Quick at Lancaster University and Nick Kaye and Adrian Heathfield at Warwick University. Etchells was also enrolled as a doctoral student for a time in the early 1990s and more recently was awarded an AHRC fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts at Lancaster University. It has been argued that Etchells' productions and writing with Forced Entertainment were instrumental in bringing process and questions of postmodern composition to the fore in UK Performance Studies (Melrose, unpublished correspondence). My own research project, as we have seen earlier in this thesis, turns on the question of how an artist might wish to involve or articulate her or his research engagement in terms of production within the writing-based university economy.

Etchells' writing may prove exemplary to that enquiry in how it has negotiated academic frameworks and discourses with respect to a publication concerned with performance practices.

'It is writing which I hope has dirty hands'

Etchells described the writings collected in *Certain Fragments* as:

[...] always resolutely bound up with practice – with long hours of collaborative rehearsal room doing and talking on more or less countless performances. It is writing which I hope has dirty hands and with that a pragmatism and fluidity that comes from the making process in which an endless making-do is one's only hope for progress, in which dogma never prospers, in which the surprises of improvisation, mistakes and of changing one's mind are the only certainties worth clinging to. (Etchells 1999:23)

This passage seems to argue that the basis for any evaluation of Etchells' writing should lie in the extent to which the writing there is 'bound up with practice' of Forced Entertainment's performance-making. I recognise that Etchells' writing employs poetic rather than explanatory registers so it might be considered obtuse for me to interrogate Etchells' writing; however, I propose to take such an approach in the present productive reading of Etchells' writing as research companion since the interrogation will in this instance further my enquiry into relations of scholarly writing practices and performance-making practices (which in the case of Etchells includes performance-writing).

Etchells' aspiration does not indicate how the two practices of writing and performance, contrasting in medium, economy, agents, discipline and times of production, might be *bound* together, unless by the connections a reader makes. Such writing might seem to elide the absence of staged performance in writing (unlike in Goulish's conceptualization of "proximity"); however, Etchells may be characterising performance practices as I have in this thesis as ongoing, epistemic practices (Melrose 2003b with respect to Knorr Cetina 2001:182). As performance practitioner and artistic director, when Etchells writes of the work of Forced Entertainment, his writing necessarily has a very different knowledge-relation and authority with respect to their performance processes than my own writing with a choreographer. I observe that Etchells does not appear to mark the ethical question of how he writes as single author 'bound up' with his collaborative performance making process, while realising the

question is less pressing than to my own enquiry, since Etchells is already writer for the company (and director) in creative productive mode.

Etchells' metadiscursive passage, cited above, may be a precedent to my enquiry by how, unlike many published writers in the domain of Performance Studies, he has foregrounded the relation of performance-making and writing practices. Furthermore, he has seemed to suggest that writing practice must change if it is to succeed in attaining the relation sought to performance-making – and this is a view one might equally arrive at from reading Gregory Ulmer's 'post-Derridean' enquiries into writing and pedagogy (Ulmer 1985b). Precisely *how* Etchells' writing practice is to change seems less clear – until, in fact, it emerges (at which point we are obliged to start from effects, trying to hypothesise causes). Many attempts to write in this sort of creative context might already be ruefully characterised in terms of a de Certeaudian “endless making-do”, “mistakes and changing one's mind”.

Etchells, in my interrogative reading, plays to fears by performance-practitioners that writing will objectify their performance practices to an academic agenda ('detached', 'clean') rather than a performance-creative one. Etchells' words seem to suggest that reflective writing which is “bound up” with a profession of art-making will take care of itself without needing to be mastered as a separate practice. It is worth noting once again, at this point, that Etchells is a professional writer for, and the artistic director of, *Forced Entertainment*. As writer, he has two professional identities, a distinction produced within his writing; between performance-process emergent and post-production reflexive. Etchells' account in this passage personified writing as if generated by its own hand; Forced Entertainment have spoken of the moment when 'the work' has emerged as an independent entity, able to assume the third person identity as 'it'. Could one conclude then that Etchells' personification of writing is not incidental, but constitutive? Might Etchells be pointing to how the person of the writer (himself, in the event) is bound up, in a collaborative relation with the person or persons of performance-making? His engagement through writing might then be experienced as bound to his performance-making work in ways that accommodate or share his sense of those processes.

If Etchells succeeds in two modes of writing that are differently 'bound up with practice', it is either imperceptive to read without contact with his/the company's studio practice, or it is quite precisely *possible to read*, provided we bring to it the

appropriate interpretative apparatuses and setups, since that particular reading will open onto the performance-making practices ‘bound up’ in the writing. Nonetheless, the times of writing will differ, in relation to those other processes. Conversely, attention is deflected from Etchells’ textual practice, at least in this passage, by its personification of writing itself, and the emphasis it throws on performance-making practices. The reader is not invited to be mindful, for example, that the performance-making ethos or ‘attitude’ he identifies - of ‘pragmatism and fluidity’ - can only be identified in *Certain Fragments* after the events of performance-making; they can only assume the status of effects and affects of choices and strategies specific to his writing practice. These are bound, as Melrose has pointed out (citing M.A.K.Halliday’s functional grammar) by the order of clausal subject and predicates and by a widely-assumed nominalisation of process. In fact, the last clauses of the extract quoted above might themselves be read as suggesting this ethos and attitude by recourse to the qualities of enthusiasm or idealism in this outline for a manifesto:

the making process in which an endless making-do is one’s only hope for progress, in which dogma never prospers, in which the surprises of improvisation, mistakes and of changing one’s mind are the only certainties worth clinging to. (Etchells 1999:23)

Ethos and attitudes, where these can be located, can be identified as technical effects of rhetoric – deliberately articulated or not³⁸ - that include the use of the present tense to make (ontologising) statements (Osborne 2000) with the conviction of natural laws, and a non-hierarchical list structure which, in place of a measured, categorising definition of ‘the making process’, offers an open-ended series of examples that I interpret as conveying impulsive energy and active imagination in their tendency to crowd in without ever closing on their quarry.

Curiously, Etchells’ writing of his ambition for *Certain Fragments* undercuts itself at this level of textual features which might be described as unattended. He has given his argument greater rhetorical impact by the surprise factor of bringing together terms from two typically opposed registers: ‘resolutely’, ‘progress’ and ‘prosper’, for example, of a formal, learned register are unexpectedly aligned with activities expressed colloquially in a largely oral economy of ‘making-do’, of ‘mistakes’ and of the proverbial ‘dirty hands’. The shaded political sentiment I derive from these lexical patterns is itself unexpected, describing a performance-making economy in which activities conventionally seen as wasteful and inefficient (or even criminal, as in some

senses of 'dirty hands') are reconfigured as fully consistent with a capitalist market drive towards progress and success. Given his earlier comments on moving to Sheffield at 'that time during Thatcherism when you could hide amongst 3-4 million unemployed' (Etchells 1999:16), the affect of pride and assurance here in the formal, learned lexicon has an equivocal or defensive edge. Reading further, it is possible to note that the Latin derivations prove treacherous to the argument that they seem to bolster. From an etymological perspective the phrase 'resolutely bound up' is a tautology, the Latin *resolutus* suggesting 'loosened, released, paid' - that is to say not bound. A myriad of ideological positionings is at play in the implicit questions these metaphors articulate relating to 'art' versus 'life' (or here, work). They are equally at play in the complex class and gender divisions of working practices, particularly amongst manual and household spheres - in terms, for example, of who cleans and who gets their hands dirty.

'There are rules'

Etchells continued in his introduction:

There are rules for the critical writing here (unspoken rules, only discovered afterwards): that it should open doors not close them; that it should in some way mirror the form of its object; that it should work with the reader as a performance might (playing games about position, status and kinds of discourse). That it should be, in short, a part of the work, not an undertaker to it. (Etchells 1999:23)

The term 'critical' is worth noting, since it is widely used in the university context, but tends, there, to assume a spectatorial position with regard to complex practices. As with the last passage quoted above, I am partly drawn to, partly frustrated by Etchells' writing with respect to my own enquiry. Once again he has set up a straw target version of writing against which to propose criteria for *Certain Fragments*. I should want to ask, however, whether it is not axiomatic, of all reflective writing, that it not close metaphorical doors (except in so far as a writer curtails and organises sense with every language decision made). To make it a rule of writing 'that it should open doors not close them' might seem however to be both an unfair and an unsuccessful dismissal of other writing in the field .

However, I admire the conviction Etchells' words express and I welcome his antipathy to a writing that, in his phrase, acts as undertaker to performance-making.

Tellingly, my own enquiry has been couched by colleagues as documentation - that is, writing produced after the event by Etchells' undertaker, although this is a paradigm I refuse for several reasons (for example, of writing in the time of making, rather than after it; *with* the other practitioner rather than 'about' her or her work; insider rather than outsider; process rather than product focused).

Etchells gave as a rule that writing 'should in some way mirror the form of its object'; despite the hedging ambiguity of 'in some way' such writing would have to negotiate a daunting text-image or subject-object impasse (see Foucault 1973, 1983). Indeed, writing (of) performance-making must also negotiate the fact that 'the form', despite the nominalisation used, will be construed very differently at different times by each of the different practitioners involved in making a production. 'Involved in' is revealing: from the spectator focus I sense elsewhere in *Certain Fragments*, my suspicion is that Etchells is thinking here not of a performer or production team's perception of form but that he is writing instead from a dramaturgical perspective, and one aligned in time and space as well as authority with that of Melrose's expert spectator.

His comments on these rules of writing continue (but note his uses of 'we', in what follows):

With these rules in mind we felt that since the work we made or loved was often in fragments or layers (of image, sound, movement and text) so too the writing should be in fragments – fragments between which the reader must slip and connect if she is to get anywhere. (Etchells 1999:23)

If I might generalise, both my own collaborative writing with artists and the writing by artists that I am reading in the present context have tended towards fragmentation. (Research questions concern the categories, modes and qualities of these fragments but I would also question the writing against which it is measured and qualified as fragmentary). Why should it be the case that some artists 'find themselves' producing fragments when they explore in and as writing their understanding of creative research and performance-making? Etchells is the first of the practitioners I am considering to comment metadiscursively on fragmentation as a writing practice. I note however that fragmentation has been practised in theoretical writing in academic registers from at least the 1970s (for example, Derrida's *Glas* first published in French 1974). A concern with fragmentation may be seen in the later Roland Barthes (*A Lover's Discourse: fragments*, first published in French 1977) and in J-F Lyotard's writing in

the 1980s (*The Inhuman: reflections on time*, first published in French 1988). This theoretical concern with fragmentation may be traced also to G.L.Ulmer's proposal of filmic modes of composition (collage and juxtaposition, 'The Object of Post-Criticism', 1985) and, earlier, to M.M.Bakhtin's attention to heteroglossia (*The Dialogic Imagination: four essays*, reprinted 1982, Holquist, M. Ed.& Trans., Emerson, C. Trans., University of Texas Press). Fragmentation may be a strategy for writing that focuses on performance practices since its mode will be tentative; an *essai* that interrupts itself since always in a performance-making multi-modal economy, "something else is going on".

Frustratingly, this passage from Etchells' introduction neither hints at the appeal of fragments to Forced Entertainment, nor – more oddly – does he seem to expect a reader to ask. Fragmentation might have emerged as strategic, a reaction against the background of conventionally political, dramatic writing ("the well-made play") taught in the undergraduate programme in the 1980s at the University of Exeter, out of which Etchells and other students formed Forced Entertainment. The rationale for Etchells' statement on fragmentation is not self-evident (underlined by the fact that *Certain Fragments* is seemingly less fragmented than the other practitioner texts I have considered as "research companions".)

'The difference between coming to a decision and forcing one.'

The following passages come later in *Certain Fragments* from a chapter entitled 'Play On: Collaboration and Process':

They talked about the difference between arriving at a decision and making a decision. The difference between coming to a decision and forcing one. They always preferred the former approaches – the meandering (with a strange certainty that you dare not trust) towards things that they needed but could not name in advance. The sign they lived by: 'You know it when you see it'.
(Etchells 1999:53)

Tantalisingly, from my perspective, this passage notes a metapragmatic discussion. Reading with my own enquiry in mind, *Certain Fragments* will perhaps always frustrate by omissions that might be seen to work as a refusal of the conventional academic authority that it also brings into play. Passages such as this form part of a narrative of reminiscence on work already made, that perhaps cannot provide the detail of present encounters that I seek to inform my research. Even Etchells' brief comments

do however open up many questions for me. For example, does the preference for ‘arriving at’ rather than ‘making’ a decision, mark what Melrose in discussion³⁹ might term an attitudinal tool as well as an aesthetic choice of performance-making? The attitude (one of the least easily grasped elements operating in complex actional situations, but which might be approached theoretically through Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, 1972, 2000:72) could be characterised especially in collaborative practices by something like a refusal to impose, a passivity, reticence or disengagement, of deliberately not reflecting on some of your choices, preferences or habits at work in your (shared) practice, so that a decision can seem to arrive under its own (or a catalytic) motivation. Recalled within this way of seeing and doing may be notions of inspiration rather than rational process, of contingency rather than foreplanning, or of the Pygmalion myth of art-making that takes on its own life, whereby the art is not finally of its artist’s making. In the situation of Forced Entertainment’s group devising processes, the preference for decisions that ‘arrive’ may also indicate an interpersonally-inflected ‘political’ tool of collaboration.

The passage from Etchells cited above is interesting too from the point of view of questioning how and to what end certain elements of practice are approached by writing. ‘Decision’ carries the conviction that it is an action which categorises events identified as such (as “positivities”). When Etchells writes of ‘arriving at a decision’, these are decisions that seem to be felt to arrive as though independently of the decision-makers, or to be forced by something external – such as an opening night. Drawing once more on the writing of Knorr Cetina (2001), I could suggest that decisions become metacognitively marked for performance-makers through a ‘dissociative dynamics that comes into play’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:178) when a question arises unaccompanied by an array of promising options. At that moment, what is being invented (or not) ceases to be ‘an undistinguishable part of an activity script’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:179). The practitioner might be said to fall out of a state of absorbed making and ‘experience[s] herself as a conscious subject that relates to epistemic objects’ and may ‘dra[w] upon resources that are entailed in ‘being-in-relation’ in everyday life to help define and continue her research’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:180). By this dissociation between the self and epistemic object, Knorr Cetina wrote, ‘moments of interruption and reflection’ are inserted into the research process ‘during which efforts at reading the reactions of objects and taking their perspective play a decisive role’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:175). A performance-making decision, identified as one

element in an epistemic practice, might be *felt* either to arrive, or might be imposed as a consequence of how practitioners - in a relational idiom - register the reactions of their growing piece during one such moment of interruption. (Conversely, one might want to argue that decisions which 'arrive' fluently were unlikely to have been experienced as problems and interruptions. If this were the case, these arriving decisions, according to Knorr Cetina, could only belong to habitual, routine moments of making; and on this basis I would not expect inventive arts-practitioners to prefer them.)

From a different angle of enquiry, to question an artist about her or his decision-making, except if and when it constitutes an aspect of established "signature", could be counter-productive. In Pierre Bourdieu's phrase, it could create an insistence 'on trying to answer questions which are not and cannot be questions for practice' (Bourdieu 1972, 1977:107). An artist might not experience decision-making in such terms while he or she is engaged in their practice. I am suggesting that under commonsensical expectation that what they have been doing will have involved decisions, she or he might readily seem to recall, retrospectively, distinct events as decisions taken. However it may be that the artwork has grown and shifted through processes more layered, extended and collaborative than are held by the concept 'decision'. Decision-making may then be a recurrent theme of some language practices rather than of performance-making; or it may mark a particular, and very late, moment in the making. Nonetheless, being able to track a line of decisions may be important to an artist constantly checking whether the current project is 'going well' or needs intervention.

'A question of going into the rehearsal room and waiting for something to happen'

The process they used was chaotic, exploratory, blundering. A question of going into the rehearsal room and waiting for something to happen. Waiting for something that amused, scared, hurt, provoked or reduced one to hilarity. (Etchells 1999:51)

Etchells' characterisation here of Forced Entertainment's working process strikes me as partly symptomatic of a popular figure of the artist working with neither plan nor adherence to tradition, following idiosyncratic, unruly creativity. On this basis, it might be identified as a refusal of single authority in collaborative practice. Melrose's comments (2002b) on the historically-specific aesthetics of everyday 'making do' in

contemporary performance might usefully bear on how Etchells' representation selectively effaced, for example, the company's own professional mastery of performance-making disciplines. The tenor of Etchells' account here is again ambiguous: 'blundering' qualifies their actions critically. Etchells might well be consciously emphasising what he feels to be idiosyncratic about Forced Entertainment's process, in contrast to his sense of non-devised methods of performance-making, yet a process entirely 'chaotic, exploratory and blundering' is unlikely to be capable of producing a professional-quality performance production (upon which the company in fact depends). Instead, it might be usefully viewed as a mode of performance-making which can only be adopted on the basis of a pre-existing professionalism and expertise – in which terms 'making-do' is possible precisely because of the certainty, of the performance-makers, that what underpins it is a matter of disciplinary mastery and professional production values. On this basis, what might look to an observer - or even be experienced by Forced Entertainment - as 'blundering,' may in practice be of the order of a calculated risk that might seem rash but is sometimes taken deliberately by professionals.

Etchells' description of 'waiting for something' that has an impact in terms of affect, is not a description choreographers have given me of how they work, although I wonder whether they might agree that they too seek 'something that happens' but which they categorise in other terms than affect.

Affect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion. But [...] emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders. (Massumi 2002:27)

Etchells' emphasis suggests that the focus of Forced Entertainment on process is more consciously dramaturgical than I am accustomed to identify in dance-making; that is, that in the case of Forced Entertainment, it involves identifying potential performance material on the basis of the performers' own affective experience, standing-in for that of their future audience.

This skill of 'waiting for' (that is, not simply waiting) may be another attitudinal tool of their performance-making, produced once again by the catalytic relationality of a collaborative process which also uses a single director in much decision-making. While expectant waiting might appear to be passive in Etchells' description, it may equally indicate a careful sensibility trained through shared

performance-making experiences and inflected by individual working patterns built on, for example, habit, motivation, trust, judgment or preference.

'What does it need?'

...working on performance projects, having amassed some material [...] we have long asked ourselves the question: 'What does it want?' 'What does it need?' Anthropomorphising the work as if it had desires of its own. [we laugh ...] at our deferral/projection to this 'it' but at the same time we know there is also an 'it' – a collection of objects, texts and fragments which resonate in certain ways (in particular circumstances, personal, historical, cultural) – and which in combination really do (I think) make demands, demands that have to be heeded if the work is to be worth making and sharing. (Etchells 1999:62)

By pointing out these curious questions which would appear to come up for them at a certain stage of a collaborative performance project, Etchells drew attention to what Knorr Cetina (2001:176) might describe as affective, relational idioms of research activity not alluded to in genres of formal empirical research write-up. Her account might suggest (were she able to entertain Forced Entertainment's production processes as ongoing research into social organization, performance creativity and metapractices themselves, driven by a professional and creative imperative) that Forced Entertainment need not laugh at themselves since their attitude of treating 'the work as if it had desires of its own' can be framed in terms of 'relational mechanisms as resources in articulating and 'constructing' an ill-defined, problematic, non-routine and perhaps innovative epistemic practice.' (Knorr Cetina 2001:180). In the light of Knorr Cetina's research then, Etchells was describing specific performance-making skills of Forced Entertainment: firstly, the perception that their project exists as a partial epistemic object, an 'it', resonant to them within its multiple instantiations as gathered 'objects, texts and fragments'; secondly, the perception that this 'it', as a representation of their research object and its growing discrete identity, has 'lacks and needs' which 'provide for the continuation and unfolding' of their practice (Knorr Cetina 2001).

In terms of the present research project, this discussion could form part of an argument for how 'theoretical' writing produced in other disciplinary fields can on occasion bring insight into the research practices involved in both performance-making and 'writings' of it. While Knorr Cetina's emphasis on a researcher's "objectual relations" seems borne out too by Etchells' account of Forced Entertainment's experience, a performance-maker's empathy with their epistemic object seems to me,

as outsider to both ‘sciences’, to be both more and less surprising than that of a research chemist. Less surprising in that, unlike for a chemist’s experimental protein, their work is instantiated by human performers. And simultaneously more surprising since deferral to an ‘it’ oddly abstracts this human activity, depersonalizing or “thematising” it. In Etchells’ description, the work’s ‘it’ is worded as though it were a strangely un-peopled ‘collection of objects, texts and fragments which resonate in certain ways’. Knorr Cetina’s focus is on how researchers’ use of relational idioms enables them to push innovative research forward (Knorr Cetina 2001:176,185). The implications of Etchells’ account however seem to go further, suggesting that performers’ belief, with whatever degree of irony, in the existence of their performance project as a supra-personal entity also strongly motivates their practice. The performers’ detachment from an impersonal ‘it’ of the work then is not I think incidental, as consequently something greater than their personal goals and preoccupations makes ‘demands that have to be heeded if the work is to be worth making and sharing’.

One of my initial premises, following Ulmer (1989), was that the expert knowledges of arts practitioners might be traced within the first person anecdotal and descriptive accounts that dominate writing of creative practice. Reading *Certain Fragments* alongside Knorr Cetina’s research seems to back up this premise since I have become alert to research skills indicated in his writing that I might otherwise have overlooked, primarily because Etchells seems to treat them apologetically as amusing anecdotes within a narrative stressing Forced Entertainment’s idiosyncrasy.

If university genres of research write-up do not admit the existence of relational research mechanisms, writing by performance-makers may more readily describe them since the field of performance research lacks formalised genres which might overlook these tools. Ironically, however, the first person and anecdotal registers of writing by arts practitioners may cause that writing to be dismissed by university arbiters of what is research-worthy as not articulating research practices with appropriate rigour, intellectual ownership, and ‘depth’.

Reflecting himself on why Forced Entertainment asks of their project ‘what does it want?’ Etchells wrote that they are ‘anthropomorphising the work’, a phrase seemingly applied retrospectively, rather than one necessarily used meta-praxiologically in the studio. This notion of anthropomorphism strikes me as a

substantial interpretative step: Knorr Cetina observed research scientists, 'taking on the role or perspective of the other' (Knorr Cetina 2001:179), temporarily investing their own personhood in the research object but not figuring it with a life of its own. Under the guise of paraphrase, the concept of 'anthropomorphism' smoothly inserts into Etchells' account a complex, unvoiced and perhaps inappropriate history of use in other discursive formations. Reading *Certain Fragments* with the hope of drawing guidance for my research writing practice, these instances alert me to substantial ethical difficulties of my project.

'Describing our work at a distance'

Perhaps the most useful discovery was in the writing I did describing our work at a distance – referring always to 'they', writing as if Forced Entertainment were some distant, semi-fictional group of people in a country far away. (Etchells 1999:16)

The direction of my research as I have thus far represented it seems, at this point, to run contrary to that of Etchells, as I am concerned with how an arts practitioner might write in the first person, as contrasted with writings of their practice through the removed impersonal third person of un-reflexive academic registers. I am curious that he found the distance of the third person useful to his project, particularly as this manoeuvre seems to be on a par with the dramaturgical orientation I have marked elsewhere in *Certain Fragments*. Indeed, while *Certain Fragments* seems, as my own research aims, to extend and articulate Etchells' understanding of his practice with Forced Entertainment, his enquiry into his practice appears - as I am analyzing it - to be primarily governed by what he anticipates will interest a reader external to that practice. Where Rosemary Lee and I have qualms over how far our writing can interest readers who have not participated in her dance-making, Etchells' writing, frustratingly for me, only seems to discuss Forced Entertainment practice to the extent that he can relate it to effects which might be perceived by spectators in performance (although his strategy may be a reaction against others' writing which would attribute causes to what has been grasped rather as performance effects by a spectator's engagement.)

I wonder too whether Etchells' strategic use of the third person contributes to the consummate professional assurance that I sense in his writing, drawn from its combination of fluent writing style with his professional credibility as artistic director and writer for the acclaimed Forced Entertainment. My research in part aims towards

precisely this kind of dual professionalism of writing and performance-making practices, yet uncharitably I wonder whether I would be more drawn to Etchells writing if it struck me as less adapted to the Performance Studies focus on artists' writing as archive document. Choices, for example, of 'describing our work at a distance' trouble me since the writing then *seems to participate in a scholarly value-set of semi-detached objectivity while basing its authority in the intimacies of performance practice engagement*. I am wary that the supposedly 'useful' writing in the third person actually pushes aside aspects of practice that may be unavailable beyond the first person of reflexivity. As before, my reservations attack *Certain Fragments* on grounds that it does not seek to occupy but to which my enquiry is directed.

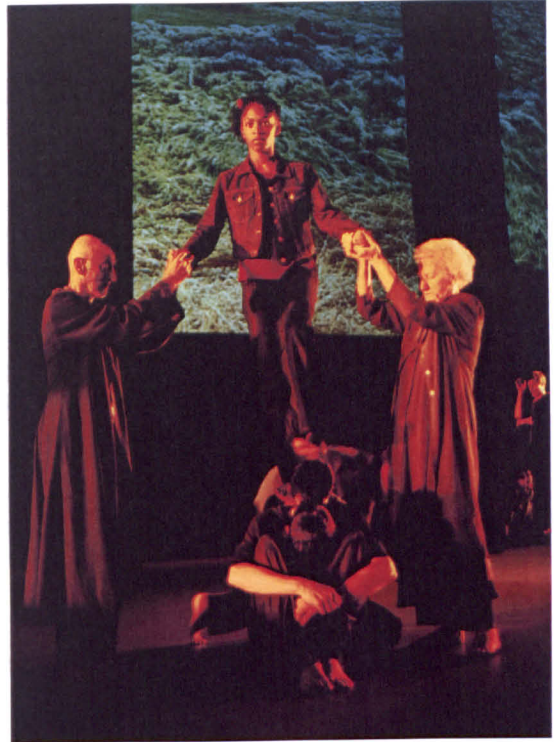


Fig. 4 Performance photographs by Pau Ros of Rosemary Lee's *Passage* (2001) showing dancers Gladys Hillman, Colin McLean, Henrietta Hale, Edie Nixon and Zebida Gardner-Sharpe

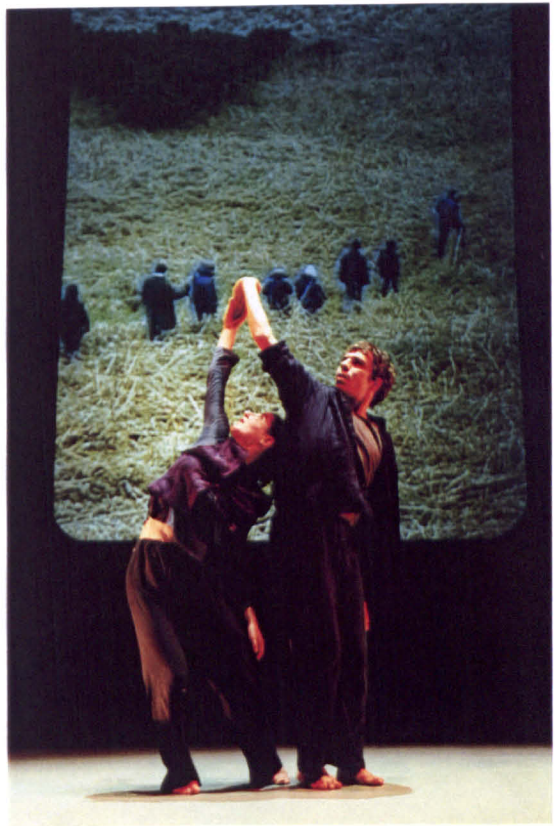


Fig. 5 Publicity photographs by Ian Tilton for Rosemary Lee’s Beached (2002) with dancers Paula Hampson, Andrea Buckley and Ruth Spencer of Chapter 4





In Proximity:

Studio Observation, Ethnography and the Open Interview

Open interview models for developing writing with a choreographer

Our awareness is always of an already ongoing participation in an unfolding relation. It is only after we have stopped running and can look back that we are clearly cognizant of what it was that set us dashing. *Participation precedes recognition.* (Massumi 2002:230)

The preceding chapter surveyed the dance and performance studies scholarship within which this present research project is situated and acknowledged my formation as a researcher within these fields. The initial impetus and possibility of this thesis arose, however, not by critical engagement with dance scholarship but by opportunities from certain choreographers to observe them and their dancers in rehearsal and then to reflect on their perspectives and practices as dance-makers. Certain philosophical questions arose for me in the course of my engagement in writing of and with these choreographers.

It is therefore *in proximity* (Goulish 2000) to projects of writing with choreographers that I can most cogently conceptualise and problematise the aspiration to creative and expert practitioner-focused writing of dance-making. For this reason, a series of pieces of writing that I co-authored with choreographer Rosemary Lee is included in the Appendix CD-ROM for this chapter, not so as to illuminate my methodological argument but because it was through the practice of producing and reflecting upon these pieces of writing that I was able to elaborate the approaches to practitioner-focused writing that are theorised here (Spinosa 2001). My writing practice was developing reflexively, that is, during the course of each project with a choreographer. Metapraxiologically, then, it is only in conjunction with my work on these writing projects with choreographers (projects premised on their professional creative expertise which is acknowledged and referenced through visual documentation incorporated into each published outcome), that my present methodological argument can be made. As such, my argument is one of the possible modes of theoretical production to be (performatively) triggered by these choreographic processes (Jones, A. 1999:2). The inclusion of this series of writings

raises ethical and epistemic questions of procedure given my status as doctoral candidate since each piece of writing reproduced here was written collaboratively for an external publication. Questions would not arise were the published writings to operate as illustration or example for the thesis. However, I am proposing that these co-authored writings have performatively been brought to *constitute* aspects of my critical argument by being reproduced and framed as doctoral enquiry.

Three projects are presented and reflected on in the first section of the present chapter and should be read in conjunction with the '*I am caught by seeing*' project with Rosemary Lee discussed in the Introduction. They form a series that is preoccupied with (differently) unfolding aspects of Lee's relation to *Passage*, a work she choreographed in 2001, and to its video-documentation by Peter Anderson (who was also film-maker for *Passage*). I propose to reflect critically on these projects and to situate methodologically two approaches to generating writing based on open interviews and on studio observation.

The present chapter will theorise my research - or epistemic⁴⁰ - aim in the co-authored projects with choreographers as producing writing that was auto-reflexive, omni-attentive, alert to its tools of judgement and time-sensitive in its observation of creative practices⁴¹. I acknowledge however, that the scholarly conventions of certain individual pieces of collaborative writing with Lee mean that they tend, regardless of our intention, to claim an authority from the convention of ontologising explanation. As Melrose commented with reference to the work of the philosopher Peter Osborne, 'writing, when it is a matter of expert registers, also ontologizes - or confers being, in terms of semantic norms upon - what it might otherwise seem only to write "about"' (Melrose 2003a, Osborne 2000:23-4). Yet the way that Lee and I generated several writings "about" one dance-making process can be viewed as strategically resistant to an ontologising tendency (although this meta-discursive implication was not discussed by Lee and myself at the time of writing and I only recognise it as such retrospectively. The series emerged instead unintentionally in response to different publishing opportunities.) A further major objective of these writings then is to produce knowledge actively as a progression of fragmentary experiments, following Gregory Ulmer's advocacy of collage as a mode for the academic essay (Ulmer 1985b:86). Knowledge-generation in the present enquiry then falls within a spectrum not of ontology, but of 'knowing as making, producing, doing, acting':

Thus post-criticism writes “on” its object in the way that Wittgenstein’s knower exclaims, “Now I know how to go on!” (Ulmer 1985b:94)

Conceived as fragments, any claim to synoptic power of an individual piece of writing is destabilised. Each was an experiment in how we might approach writing of Lee’s creative practice and was published in different contexts and via contrasting rhetorical trajectories. Lee spoke sometimes of a “core” to her practice, by which I understood her to mean a metastable unity representing her awareness of how she works, not a fixed structure prescriptive of her practice. Each of our writings tried to approach this core but different and sometimes exclusive modes of Lee’s experience seemed brought to the fore and articulated in the different publishing contexts. Read as a series, then, the knowledges these writings produce, in relation to Lee’s practice, remain provisional. Their epistemic inter-relations, I might wish to argue, are ‘complementary’ as described in the mid-1990s by Arkady Plotnitsky with respect to the work of physicist Neils Bohr (Plotnitsky 1994:5), presenting ‘features that are mutually exclusive, but equally necessary for a comprehensive, *complete*, description and analysis of all quantum processes’ (to which in the case of my project I would wish to add “choreographic”). (Note, however, that what is “complete” in terms of knowledge of performance-making remains temporary and provisional with regard to a choreographer’s own ongoing creative epistemic enquiry, Knorr Cetina 2001:182). Finally, it must be marked that every reflection I make in thetic registers in relation to writing I produced with a choreographer is ethically and epistemologically problematic; I may attribute knowledge intentions and outcomes to co-authored writing that we did not as authors then name to one another but which I identify here with regard to the concerns of my overall enquiry. The present chapter seeks to evaluate the outcomes of my writing collaboration with Lee and to consider whether and in what ways I might modulate my approach to future writing projects with choreographers. I evaluate the writings not in terms of their possible reception by a readership of dance artists, audiences and scholars, but of the degree to which they further my overall research. Lee was aware that I collaborated with her on the basis of the modes and objectives specific to my doctoral research into writing of dance-making. Yet to reproduce co-authored writing and comment on it within the isolated and contrastive frame of a doctoral thesis remains ethically ambiguous. I focus my reflections on my role and perspective within our processes of co-authored writing; however, I am equally of necessity addressing material of intense significance to Lee. I

did however invite Lee (and likewise Butcher and Brandstrup with respect to subsequent chapters) to respond to drafts of this thesis, and have at intervals incorporated her feedback into the thesis.

Practical reason is the general human capacity for resolving, through reflection, the question of what one is to do[...] from a distinctively first-person point of view. (Wallace 2003)

As Wallace, above, indicated, philosophical enquiry into the relation of reasoning and action emphasises the perspective of the doer. Any focussed enquiry into an artist's creative practice would also seem to require, as its starting point, the articulation not of choreographic *effects* visible to a spectator/observer, but of a practitioner's perceptions expressed grammatically in the first person. Several difficulties arise however for both writer-observer and choreographer from this hypothesis. Any lack of equivalent writing expertise between researcher and artist could lead to a writing of process, by a researcher, as though through the proper name of the practitioner⁴². In collaborating with Lee, for example, I largely initiated and drafted our writing, but did not necessarily comment on how my decisions were inflected by my wider enquiry into the development of (practitioner-related) writing practice in relation to dance-making. Another dilemma for my writing collaboration with Lee was that my writing training, as doctoral candidate, explored registers familiar to academia. The economies of professional dance production, on the other hand - collaborative, oral (Ong 1982), focused on the future and on action – seem far removed from those which apply in much academic publishing, making it difficult to envisage how the modes of knowledge drawn upon by Lee in her professional practice might be evidenced in the registers specific to scholarly writing. Melrose has pointed out that if universities predominantly practise their modes of knowledge through the apparatus of the book, they might well be unable to articulate or recount how choreographers 'theorise through complex action; *how* they theorise as mixed-mode actional engagement without necessary recourse to explanatory text-production' (Melrose 2002d).

Our strategy of writing with two contrasted perspectives may have modulated some of these difficulties, while continuing to draw attention to them. Co-authorship which retains difference - i.e. the evidence of different types of expertise - marks the production of knowledge as a joint and partial enterprise, thus ethically disqualifying any academic writing *of* an artist's practice that would claim (structurally) a position of objective, disengaged authority. This chapter will theorise my approach to

observation in terms of an “ethnographic turn”. It is apposite to note here then that recent critical-ethnographic literature has begun to recommend such modes of dual perspective, insider-outsider writing in terms of how it might dislodge the subject positioning conventional to an ethnographer’s ‘write-up’ of fieldwork for academic colleagues (Amit 2000). George Marcus and Michael Fischer wrote, indicatively, in 1999 that ‘[t]he traditional ethnography done by a single individual, writing with a distinctive voice of disciplinary and personal authority, increasingly may have to yield to explicit collaborative projects’ (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, 1999 edn:xvii).

Speculatively, then, the evolution of the present research enquiry may well be exemplary of a currently parallel tendency in the fields of social and anthropological studies.

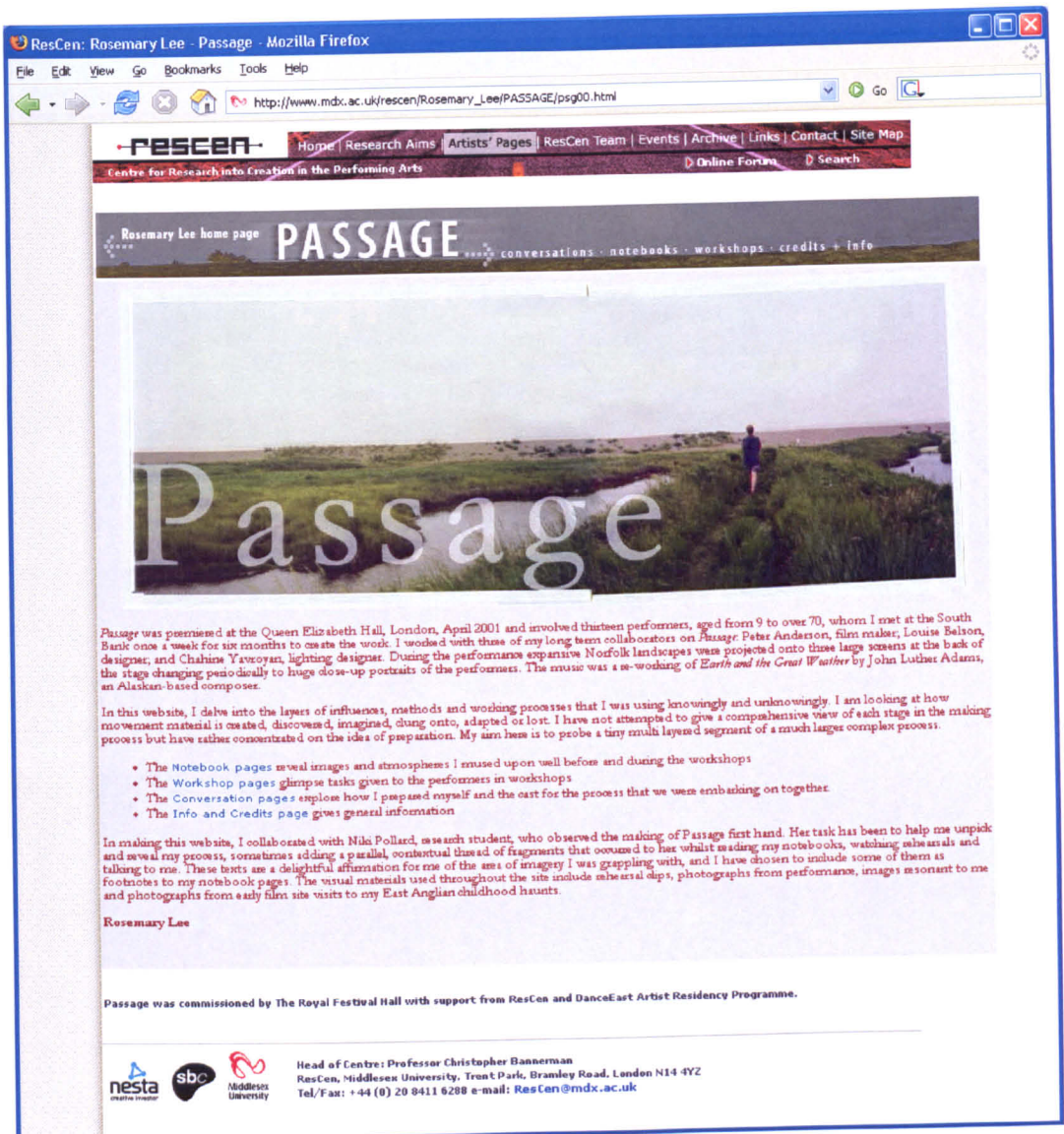


Fig. 7 Home page from Passage website, Rosemary Lee and Niki Pollard, webdesign
Roberto Battista, www.mdx.ac.uk/passage

Processes of writing collaboration with Rosemary Lee, Part 1

The *Passage* website (on Appendix CD-ROM)

It is recommended that the reader access the *Passage* performance photographs and website, reproduced on the Appendix CD-ROM (*In Proximity*) before continuing the present chapter.

Rosemary Lee and I developed a website over a period of months in collaboration with web designer Roberto Battista as a mode of enquiring into how Lee created a dance-performance work *Passage* (2001). The possibility for our collaboration arose through the post I then held as research assistant at ResCen, Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts at Middlesex University (www.rescen.net) at which Lee is a Research Associate. The scope of the site was ambitious given that for Lee and myself this was both the first project together and, for each of us, a first detailed experience of web publication. The ideas for the site were developed between us on the basis of Lee's reflexive attention to how she worked, either noted at the time or in a memory later prompted, and from my memories and fieldwork journal from the periods that I had observed rehearsal workshops. Lee's "insider" understanding of her working processes was prioritised in the website (and in much of our collaboration) with my perspective drawn on to prompt and facilitate Lee's articulation rather than to develop a separate knowledge trajectory. I participated in the workshops in an "outsider" research-marked role of observer and consequently had no insider experience of the processes of creation which could produce a dance practitioner-knowledge of Lee's modes of working that would be distinct from her own. Since we were concerned with practitioner-based understandings of dance-making, as distinct from spectator perceptions of the outcome of dance-making, any observations I offered Lee were developed or discarded by us according to how they might extend her existing understanding of her own work and of new work she might make, exploring again the processes specific to her own ways of working.

The *Passage* website from the outset had areas dedicated to visual materials, including photographic reproductions of pages from Lee's choreographic notebooks and a gallery of performance photographs and of video clips documenting rehearsal workshops. All of the materials which document aspects of Lee's studio practice were selected to coincide with our written reflections into how Lee had prepared herself and the dancers for the choreographing of *Passage*. This relation is only marked however

on the web pages that reproduce an edited conversation between Lee and myself and in which images and video clips are embedded as example and illustration of our conversation. A user accessing several areas of the website in detail may recognise certain images or clips recurring in different contexts. For a more casual user, the 'Workshop' and 'Notebook' pages might function in broader terms as process documentation.

Some areas of the website, then, can perform archival or conserving functions within journalistic and university economies of spectator-based interpretation, and into which they feed back. However Lee and I preferred to conceive of our collaboration as participating within an ongoing meta-choreographic (hence practitioner-centred) and on occasion discursive enquiry into Lee's choreographic practice. Following Melrose (2003b) I propose to adopt the notion of *epistemic object* from practice theorist Karin Knorr Cetina and argue that while artists' writing is often oriented to actual events of performance or performance-making (for example, Heathfield 2000), our research is concerned rather with the epistemic "objects" or "objectual relations". These might be partially and differently instantiated in, for example, a conversation, a choreographer's notebook or a relation between two dancers that occurs during a movement improvisation.

Objects of knowledge are characteristically open, question-generating and complex. They are processes and projections rather than definitive things. Observation and inquiry reveals them by increasing rather than reducing their complexity[...] Epistemic objects frequently exist simultaneously in a variety of forms. They have multiple instantiations, which range from figurative, mathematical and other representations to material realizations. (Knorr Cetina 2001:181-182)

As an epistemic object that is non-identical with any performance that is its partial instantiation, *Passage* may be understood, as Melrose has pointed out, as existing in an ongoing process of creation⁴³. The series of *Passage* writings of Lee and myself constitute, in certain respects, then further partial instantiations of *Passage*, an epistemic project revealed through writing processes of 'observation and inquiry', as of increasing complexity.

The 'Conversations' pages were edited together from transcripts I made of a series of extended recorded conversations between Lee and myself in the months after *Passage* was toured. The website presents an artifice of focused, articulate and uninterrupted dialogue from which markers of oral dialogue such as redundancy and

repetition (Mercer 2000, Halliday 1987, Ong 1982, 1988) have been edited out. Without this stylistic shift, we might well have been unable to discern economically, on behalf of an anticipated web-user, the complex layering of Lee's practice and the indices of a creative imagination that had very gradually come into focus for us over the course of extended discussions. It is however regrettable that we did not signal the exploratory, contingent, intuitive, and hesitant mode of live conversation since arguably the quality of ideas which emerged and were developed between us could not have done so during a single conversation.

My regret may be illuminated by an account of how interview transcripts are edited by Wade Mahon, literary scholar and editor of the journal *Issues in writing*. He commented, in interview, on the process of editing an interview transcript as 'a subjective process'. In his anecdotal account I find resemblances to my experience of preparing the 'Conversations' pages with Lee:

We [...] will try for a balance between the written text and something that sounds like a conversation. We edit the raw transcript [...] clean it up. We still try to maintain the feel of a conversation, the feel of speech[...] To a certain extent you're creating a seamless conversation in which both sides are very eloquent and well spoken, with a great command of their language[...] A lot of times people will start out a sentence in one grammatical category and end up in something totally different[...] So we try to address things like that and shape up the grammar a little bit. We decide where the punctuation goes, and where the paragraphs begin and end. That's always a judgment call. (Lucas et al 2005)

Another problem specific to doctoral enquiry is the effect of reproducing in an academic setting Lee's wording of her practice which may have been shorthand, partial descriptions of something that she was or is still investigating and elucidating within her choreographic research, even where those terms bring with them an otherwise conflicting semantic baggage. In her usage, for example, "suchness", borrowed from translations of Buddhist thought, and "archetype", from popular Jungian thought, seem to indicate a similar choreographic concern, rather than a concern with the criteria applying to the production of academic discourse. Re-employed in an academic setting, however, these same terms may appear confused and imprecise. For example, in an interview about her choreographic work *Treading the Night Plain* (1996), Lee explained how she saw that 'characters did develop, although not in a kind of linear narrative' (Clarke & Butterworth 1999:89-101, 93). Drawing upon drama-based theories of character, the interviewer and dance practitioner Sue MacLennan prompted

Lee to say more about ‘the nature of the character you’re developing for them’. Lee seemed to me to signal that she was not using “character” in the conventionally dramatic sense, by using also the notion “archetype” and commenting that it was a ‘picture rather than a development’ (94) and that she hoped the characters were ‘embedded in the movement itself’ (94). MacLennan responded with the suggestion that what she sought was a ‘not narrative, but more imagistic [...] a creation of atmosphere’ (96) in the movement, rather than a dramatic representation and noted that she was intrigued that although *Treading the Night Plain* was ‘very movement based’ (97), nonetheless it was what Lee was identifying by use of the terms archetype or character that ‘inform and help you to keep consistent patterning, the speeds, the angles and the dynamics of it’. This “something” (or processes) that Lee names “character”, marked - I am conjecturing - an actional element rather than an interpretative mechanism (raising the possibility of another conversational stall between artist and scholar). The notion of character, then, was also a professional tool for Lee that enabled her to hone the ways in which she watched and directed the dancers. As she said, ‘[t]he character helped to make his movement motifs more concrete so when we rehearse I might say “Do you remember it’s a pickpocket that you remind me of, an ariel, so go quicker, cut that corner’ (97).

Anthropologist Paul Rabinow has commented that:

For communities of discourse, mutual engagement is fundamentally an internal matter (and a highly fractured one at that). Thus, for example, while there is an ongoing effort to disprove Freudian theory, most of those who use it don’t care; they continue to analyze patients, movies, etcetera in Freudian terms (Rabinow 2003:5).

The academic registers specific to Performance Studies, for example, may include a critique of the words of a dancer who supposedly “uncritically” describes her or his intention to make movement “more real”. I would argue on the contrary, that Lee’s shifting terminology here suggests that a more productive enquiry will be into what each term temporarily stands in for in multi-modal, relational situations of a rehearsal studio, where formal registers of writing are of minor importance. Each of Lee’s terms - suchness, archetype, character - originate in discourses with contrasted, sometimes opposing values and truths: however, Lee might be said to use them to stand in, in interview, for qualities of her practice by how they seem to give her schematically some verbal purchase on them.

The form and visual design of the *Passage* website and *Beached*, a *commonplace book* both carry a sense of the dance works with which they were concerned. I use the term “a sense of” with a clear sense of its relative imprecision. As Lee perceives it, I would want to argue, she returns through writing to some of the ideas from which she created a performance piece, and not only reflects but to some extents works them again in a different medium. For example, one of Lee’s concerns was that the website design respond to her imaginative engagement with the coastal landscapes and weather of East Anglian as do the scenography and film component of *Passage*. The web design of the *Passage* website incorporates, for example, landscape photographs, some personal, some from site visits in preparation for filming. The visual layout additionally has a “landscape” orientation, most notably on the ‘Notebook pages’ as reproduced below:

Unfortunately due to technical problems, the clips of rehearsal footage included on the site are at present of poor image quality and size although they are gradually being uploaded in an improved condition.

Writing with Lee: ‘Delving and doubled seeing: on a choreographer’s practice’ (on Appendix CD-ROM)

The reader is recommended to access the article ‘Delving and doubled seeing: on a choreographer’s practice’ (Lee and Pollard 2004) on the Appendix CD-ROM (*In Proximity*) before reading the following reflections. This paper was initially presented at a symposium at Cambridge University in 2003 entitled Research/Practice /Practice/Research as one of several presentations relating to current activities of ResCen researchers, of whom Lee is one. As Lee could not be at the conference in person, I presented the paper with Head of ResCen Christopher Bannerman while Lee’s voice was included through audio clips played against projections of pages from the *Passage* website. Lee and I subsequently extensively revised and developed the paper at the invitation of a peer-reviewed journal, *Digital Creativity*. The developed and published paper included reproductions of photographs and images from the website, selected meticulously by Lee, using artistic criteria only visible to me as *effects*, that is in the images selected. In an oversight, we failed to add explanatory captions to the published images. A reader who has not seen *Passage* in performance

may not be able to recognise, on the basis of these single de-contextualised photographs, the emblems of flight or antlers that Lee discussed in the text.

The conference presentation functioned largely as an introduction to the *Passage* website but considered too how Lee and I had approached a web-based investigation of her choreographic practice, material that was developed for the journal publication. In a continuation of that article it strikes me now that the informal vitality of the first meetings between Lee and myself about the making of *Passage* crucially shaped our collaboration. I might focus my observation through Knorr Cetina's description of the 'relational undergirding of epistemic practice', of which choreography might be taken as one such practice (Knorr Cetina 2001:178), which offered a corrective to accounts of previous practice that tended to focus on habitual and routine practices, drawing for example, on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, as embodied 'systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*' (Bourdieu 1st published in French 1972, 2000:72) as governing socially conditioned, habitual behaviours. Knorr Cetina enquired of *epistemic* rather than habitual practices, and I wish to argue that her account of the relational mechanisms often employed by such practitioners might illuminate my reflective observation of how Lee and I collaborated together on writing (Knorr Cetina 2001:185).

It might be possible to observe that in our collaboration the quality of the affective and relational undergirding was inflected by seemingly arbitrary and pragmatic decisions - for example, that our meetings be held at Lee's house. From the outset our conversations frequently had a personal, sometimes private tenor, with references, for example, to experiences enjoyed or to childhood memories. I wonder if a resonance from familiar domestic practices - welcoming a guest, sitting at a kitchen table laden with family detritus - over-spilled into our conversations, inviting an immediacy of trust and engagement which would have been achieved at a far slower rate had we met in an impersonal space, such as a university with its protocol of anonymous spaces and scheduled meetings.

Gregory Ulmer speculated in the late 1980s that cognition included an emotional experience⁴⁴ and proposed "mystory" as a new genre of academic knowledge which would draw explicitly on this phenomenon, one which was denied by the scholarly convention of critical distance: 'emotional recognition is put to work in the service of invention, bringing to bear on disciplinary problems the images and

stories of autobiography' (Ulmer 1989:111). Such a lionising of emotional investment and autobiography as a new mode of (academic/theoretical) knowledge would seem to function as a strong expression of Knorr Cetina's commentary on existing research practice. Following Ulmer and Knorr Cetina, Melrose recently suggested that art-makers use the intuitive experience of recognition as a precise professional tool of inventive and disciplinary decision-making in the studio (Melrose 2005a; according to Melrose so too, on occasion, do the most creative theoretical writers in Cultural Studies). My sense is that, prompted by the particular affective resonance of Lee's home, we built on Lee's choreographic practices of recognition by using our affective responses in conversation as a gauge of judgement by which to structure how we explored Lee's art-making. In so doing, our wording perhaps took on the form of a "mystory" for Lee.

My adoption of Ulmer's neologism "mystory" is provisional; his account in several ways does not seem apt for my writing with Lee. One example of a lack of "fit" comes when he described mystory as the contribution of personal anecdote to problem solving or as expressed in the middle voice, neither of which was attempted in our co-writing. Ulmer's concept does, on the other hand, capture how our conversations, ostensibly about Lee's particular experience of making *Passage*, dwelt more often on the simultaneously personal and professional mesh of beliefs and practices that persist across Lee's experiences of choreographing. By contrast, conventional scholarly paradigms of artist development and creative maturity would seem to provide an inadequate account of our conversations. Rather than as a coherent body of past work that she builds on (a perspective that would have validity in other contexts) our research points to how for Lee certain concerns are both future-oriented and vivid to her now, feeding her anticipation of the potential in a new project. Her awareness that these concerns are recurrent in her practice functions rather as an aside and important acknowledgement. The distinction is slight and perhaps not tenable: Lee talks both on the *Passage* website and in the interview with MacLennan of the often deliberate links between her past and current works. My sense is however that, although Lee keeps returning to certain ideas that have dimensions in both her private and artistic imagination, the fact of return can also be viewed as more or less incidental, rather than a thread of historical continuity: Ulmer's mystory is of limited extension here to my research undertaking since it would focus on Lee's continuing

preoccupation with such “ideas” within a historical paradigm, rather than allowing one to theorise them in terms of futurity and change in her creative research.

Lee has observed in interview that certain of the “ideas” she returns to are culturally saturated. These include, for example, images of metamorphosis, flight and eggs, or the green man and white hart of legend. Such recurring images would be inadequately conceptualised as themes, however - that is, theorised with a spectator’s perspective - since sometimes they no longer figure in the work in the time of performance. I speculate rather that these recurring ideas are significant to Lee as a private-professional configuration to her imagination. In Ulmer’s phrase, these are I speculate some of ‘the images and stories of autobiography’ which she brings to bear on the discipline of choreography. To realise that her individual creative choices have resonated with an emblem that has a long spiritual or folkloric history might perhaps give Lee intuitive confidence and satisfaction in her work-in-progress, motivating and prompting her to continue. Such recognition will not sediment a work in epistemic terms (as a thematic imposition might do); Lee, for instance, has described how she will attend to her sense of an image’s wider cultural resonance only so far as it continues to be appropriate to the developing identity of the work (Lee and Pollard 2004). This observation with regard to revisited elements marks out an example of what Melrose has described as the differences between spectator-understandings of product and practitioner-understandings of creative process, a distinction which grounds the present research (Melrose 2005c).

Lee’s account of the making of *Passage* is striking with regard to its relatively informal metacognitive analysis of her feelings, convictions and values and their place in her decision-making. Without a concept such as *mystory*, Lee’s account might be seen as restricted to personal anecdote and of limited scholarly interest. With the intervention of the notion of *mystory*, her affective experience may be seen as integral to her artistic professional practice, in spite of the absence of external observation as to how she employs it in a studio. As *mystory*, for example, it becomes possible to consider, in more than a footnote of biographical interest, how Lee draws on her own movement preferences when setting improvisational tasks for her dancers.

While Lee and I intended to write of her practice, we have written rather of her metapractical understanding of those things that constantly support, modulate, extend and temper her practice. That is to say, I believe we were concerned with her “meta-

practice” (Melrose 2003) notwithstanding that our theorising of this meta-practice could only be made on the basis of Lee’s actual percepts, actions, responses and decisions. “Meta-practice” is here to be understood as enfolding a flexible and future-oriented configuration of professional and personal experiences, her emotions, values, convictions and aspirations, all variously trained, developed and inculcated and underlying how she choreographs. My observations on working with Lee have returned full circle to Knorr Cetina’s attention to the affective ‘relational undergirding’ to constructive, innovative practices. In place of meta-practice, I might use Knorr Cetina’s term “epistemic-practice” for those practices that are ‘knowledge-creating and –validating’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:176).

A notion proposed by one of Knorr Cetina’s colleagues Theodore Schatzki seems to align closely with what I have called meta-practice when he categorised the ‘hierarchies of ends, tasks, projects, beliefs, emotions, moods, and the like’ motivating a social agent’s behaviour as a “teleoaffective structure” (Schatzki 1996:99, as taken up by Melrose 2003b). A practice such as choreography then may be understood in the following terms:

A practice is a set of considerations that governs how people act. It rules action not by specifying particular actions to perform, but by offering matters to be taken account of when acting and choosing[...] Teleoaffectivity governs action by shaping what is signified to an actor to do. This means that the thing to do either derives from the actor’s ends and projects, given particular states of affairs and how things matter, or reflects simply how things matter in a given situation. (Schatzki 1996:96&123)

This attention to “what matters” to a practitioner highlights the potential value of Practice Theory as a field of social research to the present enquiry into practitioner-focused understandings of dance-making processes. My *Passage* writings with Lee might then be said to aim, following Knorr Cetina, to be attentive to the ‘libidinal dimension or basis of knowledge actions’ (Knorr Cetina 2001:186).

My argument is that what became important to our enquiry was not Lee’s affective experience but rather her reflexive awareness of it; awareness marked in conversation by frequent meta-cognitive tags. My conclusion is that we were beginning tacitly to examine how Lee might work an autobiographical dimension into the technical, learnt and disciplinary dimensions of her creative professional behaviour. In the *Digital Creativity* article, she worded her sense of how she begins finding movement with a dancer as ‘digging and delving’, a metaphoric phrase that

echoes the counting rhyme “one, two, buckle my shoe ...eleven, twelve, dig and delve”. “Dig and delve” might be not only a description produced in interview to stand in for and to some extent explain a remembered practical situation, but also perhaps a schematic measure of an activity or activities developed from past experience that articulated criteria by which she recognises herself as having begun to work successfully. “Dig and delve” then could be less an account of how she works than an observation by which she identifies herself as working choreographically (even if she does not at that stage know for what she digs and delves).

Many of Lee’s phrases, such as “dig and delve”, are - on critical enquiry - perhaps not solely the metaphoric descriptions that their naming might suggest. For example, when Lee wrote in our same article of her awareness of ‘the humanity so heightened in a rehearsal room, so visceral and tangible’, I wonder now about for whom and how it is heightened. Lee described her observation of a heightened state but did not allude to the complex chain of decision, expectation and behaviour of both herself and the dancers by which that heightening was produced. Could she have traced, perhaps, a heightening produced by the dancers’ anticipation and anxiety at knowing that they have begun a process that will culminate within a strict time period in performances to an audience, or by their interested expectation in what Lee will ask of them, based on previous experience of working with choreographers or on the sense of Lee’s process that they gained during her castings. She might have traced, too, in professional terms, an experience of heightening that she remembered from making other works - which achieved a favourable response - and so projected hopes and anticipation onto what she saw then in the studio. Lee could also have described - but did not in that article - how her casting decisions might optimise the potential for a heightened awareness in the studio, or of how she strategically produced such a state (or one that is “supple”, as she puts it in the *Passage* conversations) so as to facilitate how she works with dancers.

In this chapter I have been reflecting on how Lee and I wrote of her choreographic practice, but have commented little on how I participated in that process. I remember observing the relation between images with a long cultural history and what I was perceiving in rehearsal or hearing Lee talk of later, and attributing the relation to a specificity in her ways of working. I was responding to these when I brought to our conversations fragments from literature that I had previously read but which had come to mind again either while watching rehearsals or in our

conversations. I wonder whether, following Ulmer's observations of the late 1980s, they were prompted by junctures I sensed - and now attempt to articulate - between the images and stories of Lee's autobiography and the affective patterns *specific to my own*. Without framing it as such at the time, then, I would argue that I was alert to elements of Lee's practice to which I could declare some sympathetic or empathetic connection. The affective junctures I found and have identified did perhaps silently invite our collaboration, something that until then was a tacit possibility.

Lee has several times described these text fragments as "affirming", hence positive and productive rather than "critical analytical". I was reticent about bringing to Lee writing in my own voice during the *Passage* workshops. The danger I anticipated was that Lee might believe, on the basis of something written, that my responses to her work were foreclosed and foreclosing. If my responses failed to achieve "empirical fit" (Feyerabend 1975 cited by Ulmer 1989:30 and taken up by Melrose) with her own sense of her making, she might have little confidence in the receptivity of my eye and in the possibilities of writing with me. Quotations from other texts, however, could be discarded without risk to our emerging collaboration if Lee did not respond warmly to them; did not, that is, seem to experience my intuitive and schematic recognition of her choreographing in an unrelated text fragment. What I wished to communicate to Lee was positive engagement with the unfolding workshops, rather than the sketch of an analytical account of my observation of her practice.

My teleoaffective impulse in developing the writing with Lee could also be characterised as "affirmative":

Critical thinking disavows its own inventiveness as much as possible[...]The balance has to shift to *affirmative* methods: techniques which embrace their own inventiveness (Masumi 2002:12-13)

I worked not to decompose analytically what Lee was saying but to re-work and draw out from what she was saying a configuration of thought that was already implicit in how she spoke and worked, as I observed it. For example, I gathered and reflected on material from our collaboration on the *Passage* site around two notions, announced in the title as 'delving and doubled seeing,' which we had not before drawn together as an epistemic pattern. Such a configuration might have a retroactive, inventive force on our understanding, becoming something that seemed to have already been said. Lee commented that the material I drafted for the final paragraphs in her voice was apt, but

not something that she could have come to have written outside of the collaboration. (While I frequently sketched a first draft for our writings together, this observation should not efface the significance of the editing and redrafting that Lee and I undertook together, as we have for each of our joint publications.)

If an instance such as this seems to support my research trajectory, an affirmative stance can also place obstacles to academic enquiry. 'Delving and Doubled Seeing' attempts to examine how Lee worked choreographically on *Passage* and the subsequent website yet it forecloses its own debate by answering at the outset that Lee's process is of puzzled searching, delving and deep-diving, descriptions that tend to place her sense of a work-in-progress at a distance, as something supra-personal that is encountered, rather than constructed. Only now, where I have moved on to interrogate rather than simply affirm Lee's description, can I wonder about the modes of thinking which might be inferred as having shaped not only Lee's creative practice, but how she describes it to herself and others. What appeal, history and resonance do these phrases and metaphors have for her? Are they at variance with her sense of her practice at other stages of her career, for example, since her appointment as an artist-researcher at a university research centre?

My present reflective stance, disengaged and critical, contrasts sharply with the affirmative stance that I adopted when collaborating. Melrose argues that this can be usefully approached as operating to different "floor-plans", which schematically represent different positionings with regard to the subject and object of research activity (Melrose, forthcoming). Both stances seemed necessary for my wider research project, the first to engage with another's research sufficiently to write collaboratively and the second to interrogate and modulate that practice.

Writing with Lee: 'Forms of anticipation: a choreographer's notebook' (on Appendix CD-ROM)

The reader is advised now to access on the Appendix CD-ROM (*In Proximity*) the draft of a paper entitled 'Forms of anticipation: a choreographer's notebook' (Lee and Pollard, forthcoming 2006/7) before reading the following reflections. This paper was written in tandem with the article 'Delving and doubled seeing' but differently approaches the writing relation of Lee and myself by taking the form of an academic

paper initially constructed from my observing perspective, that is written over with marginal comments by Lee (and myself, on occasion). The paper is organised around discussion of a single brief phrase that Lee wrote in the early pages of her *Passage* notebook. This focus was strategic, enabling Lee and myself to address, within the formal limits of an academic paper, something of the overlaid and interconnecting dimensions of Lee's creative thought. However, this decision to shoehorn an article by one phrase was problematic for Lee as she was no longer certain what precisely had been in her mind when she made that entry many months previously. Furthermore, although I tried in the passages I wrote to situate this single phrase within my sense of Lee's creative imagination, I little considered the phrase's actual material place, as something written early rather than late in a choreographic process in a particular affective state.

The writing I built onto this phrase fails, in my judgement, not only in its foundation but at its joints. As Lee began to write her commentary, it seemed that time and again the ideas I had elaborated from her notebook phrase struck her as apt and of interest but failing in the connection they claimed to their example. I had tried to explore my understanding of her dance-making by taking the microcosmic level of one creative act (making a notebook entry) yet while Lee was broadly sympathetic to what I had written, to her eye, the single phrase on which I believed I developed or informed my understanding, was never quite 'about' any of these things. This mismatch is instructive. While my thesis, following Melrose, theorises a resistance offered by oral economies of inventive performance-making to textual conventions of knowledge-representation, it would seem that my own practice of writing was frequently forgetful of that resistance.

The first lines under my name in a late draft of the paper read, '[w]atching choreographers at work either as one of their dancers or as an observer-researcher, it has seemed to me that for many to lay hands on a notebook and know it will be used for the new piece is a first moment of magic, of ritual, in how they work.' Reflecting now I realise that this observation was triggered by something Lee said on one occasion and that the "magic" of a notebook may more typically accrue gradually, layer by layer, as it becomes a dog-eared, loyal presence in the choreographer's bag on journeys from rehearsal to office to café to gallery to home to theatre and back to rehearsal.

I question now my impulse to 'be more specific as to the forms taken by the starting points' of choreography, as it seems to issue from a position of objectifying overview such that I narrate the contingent, multi-modal, and multi-temporal specificities of making a piece in terms of having a 'beginning'. The wording is misjudged since I intended to enquire into the transitory phase of first inklings as a piece comes into its imaginary (potential) existence for a choreographer, rather than to determine a point of origin. While this process will be part and parcel of the logistics and event scripts of funding, tour booking, casting, promoting and rehearsing, when Lee talks of recognising the first 'taste' of a future piece, the sense seems to be of a developing identity, independent of its production momentum. Later I write, '[w]hat is happening when Lee muses, delves, thinks, sees or imagines an as yet unmade dance?' No activity in isolation will name the experienced moment in which Lee begins to make a piece. While I suggest verbs only to dismiss them, the implication remains that a word might be found, marking a residual ontologising imperative to the structure of my writing which is contrary to my intent.

Our decisions as to how to articulate the contrasting modes of engagement by Lee and myself remains a praxiological and ethical question to my research. Our use of dialogic modes or of an essay/marginalia structure to distinguish between observing and choreographing perspective, for example, created the not unreasonable expectation that 'what Lee said' could be extracted from 'what Pollard said,' whereas in epistemic terms the paper is conceived as joint authored throughout. A reader might furthermore apply different judgements and expectations to writing marked in an artist's narrative voice against that of a researcher, a distinction with strategic implications for Lee and myself as writers. Indeed, the terms of refusal by the editor of one journal to which we had submitted a draft made it clear that he had effectively disregarded its co-authored status, a move perhaps suggestive of a refusal to acknowledge Lee's conceptual engagement in the writing.

Reading 'Delving and doubled seeing' and 'Forms of anticipation' alongside one another now, it strikes me that while the former seems more effective in rhetorical terms, it fails to take account of its textualising research practices and so makes only an impressionistic and introductory contribution to a practitioner-theory of dance-making. 'Forms of anticipation' is more consciously academic in form and register (and rhetorically inelegant) although its attempted analysis is inadequate in critical terms. For example, my discussion of multidimensional schemata within performance-

making practice is rudimentary compared to the cited analysis by Melrose and I largely fail ‘to bring to light the categorising and discriminating work of choreography’. On the other hand, Melrose has herself indicated that the vital notion of affective investment in creative practice is difficult to ‘fit into’ an approach to multidimensional schematics (Melrose, forthcoming). ‘Forms of anticipation’ does, however, demonstrate a substantial shift in how I was approaching collaboration with Lee. Nowhere did I mime Lee’s voice, and a meta-discursive attention to judgement and form is far more distinct. Writing ‘Forms of anticipation’ was, I think, challenging and often unsatisfying for both Lee and myself, and as a piece of writing it is probably far from approachable in the case of a practitioner not trained in academia. That aside, I assess the paper as marking a significant step in our collaboration, one that, although it fails, does so with stubborn optimism.

One key concern in the paper ‘Forms of anticipation’ was with what Lee might identify as choreographic “images” and “ideas”. Lee and I are not alone in applying the term “idea” imprecisely in speaking of dance-making to stand in for some thing or process that choreographers have identified in their experience of creative practice. Choreographer Siobhan Davies for example explained in interview, ‘for early rehearsals, I have collected together some imagery, some thoughts on how to align the movements differently, some emotional ideas that I would like gradually to move through the piece’ (Clarke 1998:53). She continued:

[T]he over-riding thrust is to make quite sure that the performer[...] has something very tangible to hold on to and to express in terms of movement and ideas. In order for that to be a very real physical experience then the movement has to start with an idea and it is, at first, in words only. It is in those first few seconds of rehearsal where I’m saying words not action, that you are beginning to give [...] a new alignment between various parts of the body. (Clarke 1998:53)

These choreographers use “idea” and “image” not imprecisely but in ways that I might wish to align with Deleuze and Guattari’s writing of the “concept” in “nomad thought” according to Brian Massumi’s account:

the concept in its unrestrained usage is a set of circumstances, at a volatile juncture. It is a vector: the point of application of a force moving through a space at a given velocity in a given direction. The concept has no subject or object other than itself. It is an act. (Massumi 1992:5-6)

The open interview as methodological approach

This chapter has offered reflexive commentary on a series of writings undertaken with choreographer Rosemary Lee, writings that retained the mark of our different perspectives and expertise and which worked towards a writing practice centred on a performance practitioner's perspective. In this second section, I will draw out elements from the discussion of the collaboration with Lee to reflect methodologically on the approaches I adopted to meeting my epistemic objective.

The first approach concerns what a sociological enquiry such as ethnography might wish to term "the open interview" (Sarantakos 1993:181, Hammersley 2006:9). For the purposes of the present research, "the open interviews" were extended, semi-formal conversations with choreographers that took place by arrangement, were prompted by me with prepared questions, and that I audio-recorded and later transcribed. (My approach to transcription was not systematic since my objective was not to document conversations as research data but rather to generate material that could be reworked into collaborative writing with a choreographer). The focus of this method, as I employed it, was to build a productive rapport with a choreographer and to try directly to engage a choreographer's practitioner perspective on the basis of which a practitioner writing of dance-making might be possible. Pragmatically, these recorded conversations facilitated the co-authoring process; a busy and/or writing-reticent artist might speak more readily of their choreographing within an oral setting, producing substantial material that could be edited into a developing piece of writing.

There exists an extensive methodological literature in sociology and anthropology on open interviewing as qualitative research practice. Such studies however are focused on concerns not shared by the present study, for example of the status of case-studies data in establishing evidence-based guidelines for "best practice"⁴⁵. By contrast, certain less systematic comments on interviewing from within the humanities provide more insight into how open, semi-formal conversations with choreographers could contribute to my study (c.f. Osborne 1996). For example, two literary scholars Wade Mahon and Eric Schroeder were questioned, themselves in interview, about the interviews with scholars published in the journals that they edit:

Mahon: An interview can - though there is no guarantee that it will - show that scholars are also human beings with actual lives and personalities and are not disembodied heads containing nothing but academic jargon. Depending on

the questions asked by interviewers, we can catch a glimpse of the thought processes and experiences and personal mentoring that went into the construction of a person's views, and not just their statements as published finished products.

Schroeder: [An interviewee will] talk about what went on behind the scenes[...] So you get to trace scholars' developing thought processes, and basically see them as human beings to a certain degree. I think it's very valuable in understanding different scholars and the work they do, why they do it, the struggles they themselves have had behind the scenes, and how their thinking develops, how that fits in with the changes in the discipline as a whole. (Lucas et al 2005)

The present research might aspire to trace 'how their thinking develops', to 'catch a glimpse of the [...] experiences and personal mentoring that went into the construction' of, if not precisely a choreographer's 'views', then their ongoing creative concerns. These aspirations may be difficult to meet, however, in conversations with choreographers depending, for example, upon whether the interviewer is her or himself also a creative practitioner, and on the difficulty (impossibility) of equating in wording events that took place in actions between multiple participants in the temporally-complex situation of a rehearsal studio. I propose then to examine one instance of an interview with a performance-maker as a "research companion" to guide my own practice and reflection of focused conversation with choreographers.

4th “research companion”: Nick Kaye’s interview with Elizabeth LeCompte

In reflecting for the present chapter on methodologies of open interviewing, I propose to write alongside a published example of an interview with a practitioner and to consider whether the present research might be guided by it as “research companion”. Nick Kaye’s *Art into theatre: performance interviews and documents* (1996) stands as a significant precursor, or as will be suggested, counterpoint to my research. Kaye brought together a series of interviews that he carried out mostly in the early 1990s, with a few dating from the 1980s, with contemporary performance practitioners including seminal figures such as John Cage, Richard Foreman, Marina Abramovic and Richard Schechner. The publication also includes extensive performance and production visual documentation, for example, photographs, stage designs and plans. Kaye’s *Art into theatre* is one of only a handful of book-length publications (for example, Clarke and Butterworth 1998, Heathfield 1997, 2000, Morgenroth 2004) to collect the writings of, or interviews with, performance-makers.

Kaye’s introduction encourages a reader to adopt an art theoretical (spectating) standpoint, aligned to the interviewer’s, rather than artists’, subject position⁴⁶. *Art into Theatre*, he wrote, ‘is organised and edited in relation to notions of “inter-disciplinarity”’ (Kaye 1996:1). He qualified his statement, noting that ‘these interviews and documents exemplify an innate tension between any such critical project and the practices it would circumscribe’ (Kaye 1996:1). His grounds are that while the book was formed by choices that ‘reflect a critical concern with an inter-disciplinary turn in art realised as performance, and for strategies in contemporary theatre which can be read against these challenges to the fixity of the terms and parameters of the work in art’, the interviews ‘inevitably pul[l] away from any single, critical centre’ (Kaye 1996:1). However, his argument seems compromised by the fact that he was the single interviewer hypothesising this critical centre from which systematically he then perceived the interviews as pulling away.

The interviews are relatively open in form (prompted by Kaye’s questions but also following-up on ideas suggested by the artists in the course of their responses) the artists interviewed will probably have perceived themselves as having been actively involved in determining the intellectual content of these exchanges. However, in his

introduction, Kaye seemed to efface the artists' agency in self-representation, referring to the interviews not as collaborative productions but as 'material' to be read in terms of "an inter-disciplinary turn".

[T]his introduction offers [...] a critical reflection upon the developing logics of these discussions, setting out, in relation to the work presented here, ideas of inter-disciplinarity against which these dialogues, and many of their parallels and exchanges, might be usefully read. (Kaye 1996:1-2)

The introduction continues with his observation that in talking to theatre makers, rather than those trained in visual arts, he was attentive to 'strategies [...] which can be read against these challenges to the fixity of the terms and parameters of the work in art'. *Art into theatre* then differs markedly from my research project in terms of approach since Kaye focused his attention on theatre makers in terms of contested disciplinary definitions of theatre in university-based art and performance studies. While he listened to the artists in interview, then, it appears to me that he was interested in their work as performance-makers insofar as it could be brought to bear on his writing-theoretical project of conceptualising inter-disciplinary performance - a critical project that he did not, on the evidence of these interviews, bring to the artists' attention. At root too, the spectator-bias of university-based performance studies, from which his project was derived, would have oriented his questioning towards concerns of performance reception and interpretation, rather than performance creation and production (Melrose 2005c).

My response to Kaye's collection will focus on his interview with Elizabeth LeCompte, director of the renowned Wooster Group. Kaye opened the interview with a series of questions about how elements from Japanese pop culture, Noh theatre and Chekov's *Three sisters* were used in *Brace up!* (The Wooster Group 1991):

Do you see specific connections between the Japanese material and the Chekov?

Well, I do after the fact, but it isn't something that informs the way we go about making the pieces. After the fact certain things become obvious, but they're never obvious to begin with. I didn't see any reason for them to be put together other than that I happened to be interested in the formal aspects of Japanese theatre and some of the Japanese pop culture stuff and that I happen to like Chekov's writing[...] Of course, eventually - because I and the company are the catalysts for the two things coming together - I will see things. (Kaye 1996:254)

LeCompte's response marked awareness of Kaye's question as an interpretative, audience-perspective one, and that she implicitly rejected his line of questioning, dismissing the connections he asked after as "obvious" and "after the fact". What was of interest, she seemed to suggest, was the cultural elements themselves, not how or why she brought them together. She refused the interpretative slant of his questioning, which turned on a logic of authorial truth and meaning, by responding that 'I happened to be interested' in these two sets of material and, that 'Of course, eventually – because I and the company are the catalysts for the two things coming together – I will see things'. LeCompte's resistance to Kaye's questioning is pertinent to my project of listening and questioning performance-makers, suggestive as it is of how artists may find the questions and concerns of performance-academics misplaced or inadequate.

Kaye however seemed to ignore her warning and drew further upon a performance studies knowledge of Chekov's drama to ask about *Brace up!* LeCompte responds: 'I don't know the history of the Chekov. I hadn't, before I'd done this, seen a Chekov play except in Dutch' (Kaye 1996: 254). His questions evidently did not support her to discuss her work and increasingly, her responses appear defensive and ill at ease: 'well, I don't speak the language. I don't have the history of that, I don't know what that is'.

Eventually, however, LeCompte moved out of this negative modality, describing how she responded to Noh drama: 'I think I was probably drawn to that structure, that physical architectonic structure. How they moved, how they dealt with entrances and exits' (Kaye 1996:255). For my research purposes, LeCompte's response may be an exemplary account of how a theatre-maker can respond affirmatively (rather than critically, as an academic must) to other cultural materials that then become creative but partial resources for performance-making. For LeCompte, it was not necessary to research the historical social situation of Noh theatre. Opportunistically, she recognised in recordings of Noh theatre something that productively and epistemically (Melrose 2005b & 2003b with respect to Knorr Cetina 2001) matched her existing creative interests:

Entrances and exits are extremely important. That's the defining thing, isn't it? In theatre. That's essential. It's the deepest, deepest place for me. But I've said this before. (Kaye 1996:255)

What might be said of this reluctance or discomfort in talking of how she works that is hinted at in the apologetic closing comment, 'But I've said this before'? If indeed her sense of how one enters and leaves a stage is fundamental to her directing practice and to theatre as a form, then more must remain to be said. Did she allay uneasiness at exposing her theatre-making values by foreclosing further discussion with 'I've said this before'? Was she uneasy that her beliefs about how she works might prove insufficient under Kaye's analytic scrutiny?

Kaye's next question again seemed ill-advised. Rather than responding to her conviction about entrances and exits, and in spite of her clear signal that she was not concerned with Noh as a historical form, he asked a question out of his own interest as a spectator with knowledge of Noh:

One of the things that interests me about the use of Noh is its emphasis upon continuity – and so its reflection upon its own history. This seems to be reflected in the Wooster Group's work. Performances seem to comment on previous productions, images are re-used, rehearsal procedures are remembered or re-presented. Were you interested in Noh's concern with its own history?

I don't know. I mean, I'm not a Japanese theatre artist. I don't study Japanese theatre. I don't have any academic interest in Japanese theatre. (Kaye 1996:256)

LeCompte chose not to respond to Kaye's observation about self-reflexivity in Wooster Group productions. Curiously, Kaye did not press her further over this but instead continued: 'I'm just interested in [...] what the juxtaposition of the Japanese material against the Chekov might be doing' (Kaye 1996:256)

Shannon Jackson's 2004 *Professing Performance* included an analysis of Kaye's interview with LeCompte as an exemplary exchange between 'postmodern theorist and postmodern artist' (Jackson 2004:112):

Where Kaye sees self-reflexive "re-use" and parodic "appropriation" of familiar elements, LeCompte characterizes her work simply as "allow[ing] them to be in the space together without this *demand* for meaning." "Do you mean that I'm demanding meaning of you?" asks Kaye, sounding like a startled therapist." [...] Many trained in "theory" would claim to know exactly how to respond to the misguided paradigms of the maker. To foreground performance practice without attention to its historical chain of signification is to remain enmeshed in an old metaphysics of presence. To focus on "exits and entrances" without "reading too much about Noh" is to disavow one's location in an appropriate series of citations. (Jackson 2004:111-112)

Kaye's questions might be argued to have been based in a post-structuralist understanding of performance and performative objects as not occupying:

a single, "proper" place in knowledge; there is no such thing as the thing-in-itself. Instead, objects are produced and maintained through a variety of sociotechnical systems, overcoded by many discourses, and situated in numerous sites of practice. (McKenzie 2001:18)

Later in the interview, while discussing LeCompte's interest in theatrical forms frequently borrowed from other cultural traditions, Kaye had a moment of realisation:

That kind of focus doesn't offer itself to any kind of question I might ask about meaning or theme, does it?

No. Again, you can talk to me about what's going on on the stage. (Kaye 1996)

What Kaye and LeCompte were stumbling against is perhaps exemplary of what the philosopher Peter Osborne described as a long-standing preference in cultural studies for questions of *semiosis* over *aesthesis* (Melrose 2003b & 2003a with reference to Osborne 2000:21). LeCompte's response here, as elsewhere in the interview, declared that she would not be drawn to reflect interpretatively on the production. However, her sense of what she was prepared to talk of is tellingly contradictory, marking precisely that discursive lack in cultural studies theorised by Peter Osborne. For example, she was prepared to talk about the 'literal objects' with which she begins rehearsal, but not the 'ideas [that] come after the fact' (Kaye 1996:260), indicating an ideological stance towards physical objects as discursively pure and self-presencing. This seems to be in the tradition of, for example, Minimalism in art or William Carlos Williams' credo for modernist poetry as 'no ideas except in things'.

LeCompte's stance is complicated by an unmarked slippage between the times of theatre-making and performance:

[Meaning] only happens for me in the space. In the moment of the theatrical act. Here I can just tell you the way I came up with those images, the way they are brought to the stage. (Kaye 1996)

Moments later she told Kaye, as cited above, that she will only talk 'about what's going on on the stage'. This slippage seems to be at the root of the difficulty in their conversation: LeCompte appeared unable to find a way to talk about how she makes directorial decisions that both anticipate and create what will be 'going on on the

stage' except in terms of meaning for a spectator. Such a meaning she refused to discuss since, by her logic, that 'only happens for me in the [...] moment of the theatrical act'. Yet she seemed to believe that Kaye wished her to produce a version of the knowledge she has while it is 'going on', even though her knowledge in the performance event is as an (expert) spectator not director. This she would resist; 'I don't have much interest in it'. What she seemed unaware of in this interview are the precisely epistemological difficulties facing a performance-maker trying to account for decisions in epistemic terms.

Since these difficulties are rarely acknowledged in performance studies, Kaye and LeCompte could perhaps only believe that their interview was failing because, as academic and artist practitioner, they had different practices and concerns:

It may be that we don't have a language to talk with.

It's possible. (Kaye 1996)

This conviction that artists and researchers lack a shared language (or, more generally, a dimension of concern) is a core preoccupation to my research. In its place, my research must produce acknowledgment of the epistemic difficulties for artists in talking of performance-making. The difficulty is constitutive, not a matter of a difference of perspectives and agenda. The conversation between artist and researcher here reached an impasse, but my argument is that they had mistaken their stumbling block:

Does it not also mean that the work is difficult to talk about, in certain respects?

Well. It depends on what you mean by 'talk about'. I don't think it does. I just can't talk about it in literary terms (Kaye 1996)

LeCompte seemed to feel that the difficulty in their conversation would be resolved if she were prepared to discuss her work in what she called, 'literary terms', indicating probably a formal, academic register of reflection.

I could, if I wanted, spin off and say, Oh, yes, isn't it funny how this image looks good, or it's good with that sound. I could even, after the fact, probably – if I were a writer – write a whole thing on the meaning of Japanese culture and Western language. About meaning and lack of meaning, about Western poetry and Eastern poetry. (Kaye 1996)

Evidently LeCompte regarded such writing as not relevant, an unconnected ‘spin off’, to how she worked with the Wooster Group: ‘If I were a writer’, she said, but ‘I don’t have much interest in it’. In my own enquiry, I must examine precisely this; of why and how an artist without a background in academia, would wish to explore their art-making within the formal registers of university discourses. The final comment cited below, revealed both LeCompte’s expectation of how an academic like Kaye studies her work, and of why her dialogue with him was failing:

I think it’s probably very instructive looking at the work next to other people’s work, too, to be honest, just by my inability to grapple with whatever it is you’re telling me. (Kaye 1996)

Jackson analysed this as:

Whether intended or not, Kaye found himself installed in the position of He-Who-Is –Preoccupied-With-Meaning. As such, he faced a moment when his interpretation was rejected, not necessarily because it was wrong, but because meaning was declared irrelevant to She-Who-Is-Preoccupied-With-Making[...] While her theatre has become a synonym for postmodernity, LeCompte is an avant-garde theatre practitioner who does not embrace the discourse’s terms. [...] Attention to the deconstruction of meaning still focuses too much on meaning, something that she opposes to making. (Jackson 2004:111-113)

There are more positive accounts of artist-scholar exchanges. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, for example, published in the same year as Jackson, wrote that:

New directions and sources of creativity within Performance Studies arise from the living, breathing symbiosis between aesthetic practices and the study of them. There is an active interchange between theory and practice, scholar and artist, art form and knowledge formation. New objects of study, particularly the unruly objects of contemporary art, destabilize not only what counts as art but also how they and all that came before them might be studied [...] Performance Studies picks up the gauntlet thrown down by resistant artistic and cultural practices. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:46-7)

Other interviews in Kaye’s collection reveal further conversational stalls due to a discrepancy between the expectations of questioners and the responses that artists can give. Richard Foreman, for example, commented that: ‘People are always asking me to locate specific change points and so forth. This is really hard to say’ (Kaye 1996:105). Foreman’s difficulty might be illuminated in part with reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s 1972 analysis of the consequences of an anthropologist asking someone for an account of their activities.

Invited by the anthropologist's questioning to effect a reflexive and quasi-theoretical return on to his own practice, the best-informed informant produces a *discourse which compounds two opposing systems of lacunae*. Insofar as it is a *discourse of familiarity*, it leaves unsaid all that goes without saying [...] Insofar as it is an *outsider-oriented discourse* it tends to exclude all direct reference to particular cases (that is, virtually all information directly attached to *proper names* evoking and summarizing a whole system of previous information). (Bourdieu, 1st published in French 1972, 2000:18)

Foreman then might appear to be meta-discursively aware of the difficulties of responding to questions as to his creative practice. In Bourdieu's account, a practitioner 'leaves unsaid all that goes without saying' by the workings of *habitus*: 'subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know' (Bourdieu, 1st published in French 1972, 2000:79). Bourdieu revisited this conviction in his later writings, for example, when he argued that 'practice does not imply – or rather excludes – mastery of the logic that is expressed within it' (Bourdieu French original 1980, 1990:11). Also:

[A]s soon as he reflects on his practice, adopting a quasi-theoretical posture, the agent loses any chance of expressing the truth of his practice[...] Simply because he is questioned, and questions himself, about the reason and the *raison d'être* of his practice, he cannot communicate the essential part, which is that the very nature of practice is that it excludes this question. (Bourdieu, French original 1980, 1990:90)

I will later seek to argue that Bourdieu's argument cannot be applied to situations of professional dance-making, that is to say, that an expert choreographer cannot be assumed only to be able to adopt an inadequate 'quasi-theoretical' knowledge relation to their practice.

Recent research into the brain activity of expert dancers watching movement styles that they had or had not been trained to perform indicated the existence in the brain of a 'mirror system': 'While all the subjects of our study *saw* the same actions, the mirror areas of their brains responded quite differently according to whether they could *do* the actions or not' (Calvo-Merino et al 2004:7). This would suggest that 'action observation in humans involves an internal motor simulation of the observed movement' (Calvo-Merino et al 2004:4). It may be, however, that the question of *what* the dancers watch and understand by motor simulation is itself complex, as the following anecdote from an interview with Mia Segal, an authority on the bodywork of Moshe Feldenkrais, suggests:

It was fascinating to watch [Moshe Feldenkrais] working. That is how I learned for many years. After a time, Moshe was photographed and videotaped as he worked. I got a terrible shock when I saw the first videotapes: his head, eyes, shoulders, chest, and breathing were not shown. I did not know what I was watching. I suddenly realized that the last thing I watched were his hands. In the videotapes the camera cut off part of Moshe's body and focused on his technique – how he moved a toe... When I worked with Moshe, I would look at him – rarely the way his fingers were manipulating a body. I found nothing at all in those videotapes. (Hanna 1995:134-5)

It might be hypothesised that less conversational stalls will be encountered when an interviewer is also a performance practitioner, particularly one who has collaborated with the interviewee. One instance of such an interview could be dancer, teacher, choreographer and advocate Gill Clarke interviewing British choreographer Siobhan Davies for whom she danced for many years. Clarke could draw upon her memories of rehearsal, her impression of the developing work in contrast to other Davies choreographies, and compare it with Davies' perspective. For example, Clarke said:

I can remember going back several times over the structure of the very beginning of the piece. It seemed very important, having made this thing that was highly complex, how you let the audience into it, even more maybe than many other pieces. Do you have recollections about that? (Clarke 1998:56)

Clarke could also challenge Davies account in a way that an interviewer without studio-experience of the way her company works could not. For example:

You talked about ideas and emotions, even structure. I feel while it's clear that you come into rehearsal with all that, the strength of what you're doing is that where we begin from is actually very physical. (Clarke 1998:54)

I remember having a sense when we'd finished the piece, near to performance, that you suddenly weren't sure about how this would communicate with an audience. (Clarke 1998:60)

The dialogue between Clarke and Davies evidenced none of the stalls that characterised that of Kaye and LeCompte (not forgetting however that in both cases what is published is a perhaps highly edited version.)

Frequently, as I read interviews with or accounts by artists, questions arise that could probably only be answered as the event recounted was unfolding in the rehearsal studio. For example, in an interview with British choreographer Yolande Snaith by dancer, choreographer and scholar Ruth Way, Snaith described how she generated dance movement from improvisations:

This is done by repetition acknowledging that what was spontaneous before, can't be again. So things are always allowed to change, to be found again, but with a difference. In *Blind Faith*, we actually filmed the improvisations and then tried to learn them from the video, but in the re-doing some moments can be easily reconstructed whereas others have to be adapted for the linking and cannot be kinetically deciphered. (Snaith in interview, Way 2000:57)

Snaith's turn of phrase is worth consideration; 'things are always *allowed* to change' (italics added). Snaith did not detail however the process of making this allowance, of how indeed she identified a series of occurrences as 'allowing change'. Her explanation might, for example, be one that looks back to reinterpret what was previously experienced as a frustrating episode in a rehearsal of failing to recapture a moment as it had been seen or felt by choreographer or dancer. On the other hand, was Snaith referring to a knowledge she has that the quality of a certain improvised moment is not yet fully achieved to her sense of the piece being composed and so which would change as she reworked it with the dancers?

In 2004, Joyce Morgenroth edited a collection of extended pieces, written in the voices of twelve renowned contemporary American choreographers, drawn from interviews. The collection, *Speaking of dance*, is significant to my enquiry since it is one of very few publications dedicated to choreographers' accounts. Each choreographer recounts biographical anecdotes of their emergence as choreographers, their early experiences and training in dance, influential teachers, creative preoccupations, initial works through to more recent works. While acknowledging the wealth of detail offered on the lives and careers of these choreographers, I regret the omission of the interviewer's voice. The accounts seem to me curiously opaque to a reader's enquiry, in some sense homogenised by being edited into an orderly narrative. The existence of the interviewer has been edited out, producing the semblance that each choreographer wrote their chapter directly. However, what is missing from the chapters is a meta-commentary explaining how or why they came to write these accounts. I sense that this expectation would not have arisen had evidence of the interview set-up been retained, since then the metadiscursive onus would fall to Morgenroth as the active agent in the dialogue to signal her motivation (to readers and to the choreographer) for asking different questions. It seems to me unclear from the collection why a choreographer might wish to describe their lives as choreographers and what a reader might draw from such an account.

It is notable that none of the publications of artist interviews that I have been discussing include photographs that could index the specificity of the performance makers' practices. The website on which I collaborated with Lee, 'I am caught by seeing' could be regarded as an inversion then of these published interviews with choreographer. For that project, Lee and I foregrounded a section of studio documentary footage which was then accompanied by Lee's words that could otherwise have been presented in the form of 'an interview with the artist'.

By contrast, ResCen has published transcripts of artist/scholar exchanges that took place in a seminar series, 2003-2005 (available at www.rescen.net). At each seminar, some or all of the ResCen artist Research Associates spoke alongside an invited expert from a different disciplinary field and responded to questions from the audience. These exchanges are significant to the present research on two counts: firstly that the artists concerned not only responded to questions from academics, but also questioned one another and the invited scholar. Secondly, these artist/scholar exchanges did not occur in isolation, as may have been the case, for example, of Kaye's interview with LeCompte, but as an ongoing dialogue with one another and with invited scholars, by nature of their research posts at ResCen and hence sustained commitment to examine and speak of their creative processes.

I propose to comment here on the transcript of the final seminar in June 2005 which did not in fact feature a guest speaker but instead might be said to have staged and thematised the potential for conversational mismatch between scholars and artists examined in this chapter. For this seminar, the head of ResCen, Christopher Bannerman read a prepared paper but was interrupted from time to time by either Lee or fellow research associate, composer and theatre maker Graeme Miller. Lee or Miller signalled their interruption by ringing a bell, then briefly appeared to comment on their perspective of what Bannerman had been saying, and then rung the bell a second time to punctuate a close. Bannerman then continued with his paper. The inventive format of the seminar is interesting, so far as I can judge from the published transcript, because it reflexively presented Lee and Miller as artists alert and skilfully responding immediately in a live, unfolding situation, working with what that situation had triggered for them. I am reading only the seminar transcript, but sense that this format facilitated an engaging, dynamic seminar. Lee and Miller's mode of intervention could be seen as emblematic of their mode of work in terms of an oral economy characterised by contingency and 'thinking on your toes' (c.f. Halliday 1987:148).

Bannerman, by contrast, as “the scholar” was represented in terms of a scriptural economy that is unresponsive to a live, changing situation. If his paper “others” the artists sitting alongside him, they intervene, disrupting that scriptural economy. Yet, the hierarchic power to introduce and frame the seminar was retained by “the scholar”; the “artists” speak only in fragments, seemingly staged in terms of this seminar as incapable of sustained, reflective thought.

The seminar was entitled ‘Outside looking in’, suggesting both an orientation to an outsider’s perspective on rehearsal and how a performance-maker may invite an observer to respond to a work in progress or aim him or herself to take up dramaturgically the position of future spectator. As outsiders looking in was also, however, the position of Lee and Miller with respect to Bannerman’s presentation.

Approaches to studio-observation: research methods in support of writing with a choreographer

[Rhetoric] does not consist only in sorting out the pros and cons of an argument in a calculating way. The rhetor as one who observes is not a cogitating ego standing apart from the phenomenon that calls or claims her to respond rhetorically, but is one who always already is in intimate relatedness to the phenomenon that claims or calls. It is this relatedness, this finding oneself in such a disposition (attunement) that calls for observation. (Joseph 2000).

The present enquiry is centrally concerned with questioning relations between dance-making and writing, dance-makers and writers; one such relation occurs when as a researcher-writer, I observe dance-makers at work. I note that the faculty of sight and acts of seeing have long been philosophically and culturally connected to conditions of knowledge, understanding and truth (suggested, for example, in the term *insight*) and that such a connection shadows my take-up of position of observer in a dance studio. Given the importance in the present research of observing choreographers at work, I might acknowledge, for example, Foucault's writing in the mid 1960s of how clinical practices of observation developed in which he noted the 'deep structures of visibility in which field and gaze are bound together by *codes of knowledge*' (Foucault 1963, 1973:90). More recently, Melrose reminded performance scholars that observation entails both an ocular act and an account of that act (Melrose 2002c).

In the quotation cited above, Aloysius Joseph described the productive activity of a rhetor within a broader argument concerned with observing as a process of, in his phrase, 'meditative thinking'. For my purposes, I cite Joseph's description because, to my eye, it situates the significance of the affective relation of observer to the situation observed, and because the observer in this instance is a word expert – a rhetor – albeit one associated with verbal performance. I wish to draw on Joseph's proposal that observation need not be a consequence of an objectification of what is observed, but rather it evidences a performative connection whereby an observer 'is in intimate relatedness to the phenomenon that claims or calls' for observation. The experience of 'relatedness, this finding oneself in such a disposition' is what enables – and disposes one – to make an observation.

Joseph's analysis prompts two reflections on the present research project. Later I will reflect that the engagement of choreographers as I have observed them in the

multi-dimensional activity of rehearsal might share the qualities of an *attunement*. In this chapter, I will reflect that the premise for the evolving co-authoring process with Lee, focused on her dance-making, seemed to depend on our conviction that I was in some sense (by having watched) “attuned” to what happened in Lee’s rehearsals. This attunement, however, was fundamentally illusory, although nonetheless effective in writing-productive terms: only in spectating terms could I experience (and project) a ‘relatedness’ to the people and activity of rehearsal, a relatedness triggered performatively and interpersonally by the disposition and behaviour between myself and those working in the studio. This particular observation marks how my engagement remained within structures of spectating although I have been arguing that my disposition as observer of rehearsal was not (and could not be, given the practitioner-centred aspiration of the present research) that of a spectator of performance. In practice-focused terms, however, my relatedness is always compromised – I was an outsider, not a dance practitioner - and so would appear limited to a level of aspiration. I wish to argue, however, that an observer may find her or himself in a less compromised attunement (not limited to a spectator sense of enthused “connection”) to what is taking place in the studio, albeit one that is indeterminate, temporary, governed by contingency and perhaps experienced at a later time. In analysing the process of writing with Lee, I perceive this experience as consequent to an intersubjective attunement between choreographer and researcher. I might wish to describe such an attunement as “virtual” (Massumi 2002:30) yet this could be to disregard the “real” difficulties of evolving creative practice-focused writing.

My account of an “attunement” might be read alongside Gregory Ulmer’s recommendation that to develop practices of what he has termed “electracy” (‘which is to digital media what literacy is to print’ Ulmer 2003:xii) ‘we must learn how to write and reason with our state of mind (attunement, Stimmung)’ (Ulmer 2003:59). Ulmer cited an account of how Martin Heidegger named Stimmung ‘one of the existentials grounding one’s being in the world. It named the ground of feeling that lets us know where we are “at”, how we are doing, how things are with us or stand with us (in us), how we find ourselves to be (*Befindlichkeit* – “situatedness” or “state of mind”)’ (Ulmer 2003:59, citing Ballard, B.W. (1991) *The role of mood in Heidegger’s ontology*. New York, University Press of America, 33). Ulmer described how, for

Heidegger, “attunement” named ‘the way in which things may be known through moods’ (Ulmer 2003:60). Ulmer cited Heidegger’s example of a book that is “boring”:

The book must make itself felt, not as an inducing cause, but rather as that which attunes us[...] Thus, although it is inside, the attunement plays around the thing outside at the same time[...] It does not cause the boredom, yet nor does it receive it merely as something attributed by the subject. In short: boredom – and thus ultimately every attunement – is a hybrid, partly objective, partly subjective. (Ulmer 2003:60, citing Heidegger, M., 1995:88, *The Fundamental concepts of metaphysics: world, finitude, solitude*. Trans. McNeill, W. & Walker, N., Bloomington, Indiana University).

The first section of this chapter assessed a series of writings that Lee and I produced focused on the making of her dance-work *Passage* (2001), examining how in methodological terms we negotiated a co-authored approach in our projects. I have begun to theorise our co-authoring approach relationally and by the model of an open interview. The second section of this chapter, then, focuses on studio observation by a researcher who is separate from the creative team as a method that might support co-authorship with a choreographer. I will theorise the precise difficulties posed by that non-involvement for research which aims at writing (of) a practitioner’s theoretics. Even as the first section focused on writing responsive to the making of Lee’s *Passage*, this second section focuses on my writing with Lee that was responsive to the making of her subsequent dance work *Beached* (2002, revised and retoured 2005-6) with dancers Andrea Buckley, Ruth Spencer and Paula Hampson. These reflections are then extended into writing that critically contextualises my approach to studio observation in terms of ‘an ethnographic turn’ (Foster 1996:183), prompting me to examine trends not only in anthropology but also in the field of practice theory.

Lee’s decision to invite me to observe rehearsals for both *Passage* and *Beached* was framed by her commitment to enquire into her working processes that is implicit in her position as artist-researcher at a practice-focused research centre (ResCen), which has described how it ‘exploits a number of strategies for observing and mapping practice, including third person and participant-observation, and the formation of research teams’ (www.rescen.net accessed 25/4/06). Other ResCen projects have raised questions that open out the questions of the present study. For example, a website concerning the making of *[h]Interland* by Lee’s ResCen colleague Shobana Jeyasingh, the website’s editor Sanjoy Roy posed a series of questions that included:

Is observation ‘successful’ only to the extent that it accords with the creator’s own view of her practice?

Is it useful, or sufficient, to comment on what is *not* observed?

How much of the observers' own baggage [...] should be brought into the foreground, and in what way?' (Excerpts from [h]*Interland* pages of Shobana Jeyasingh's area of the ResCen site, www.mdx.ac.uk, accessed 11/4/06)

Underlying these questions, I would argue, lies a question, raised in the present research, concerning the ethics of studio observation as a research practice; 'for whom does an observer record her or his impressions?'

Roy recorded Jeyasingh's comment that in some instances an observer may understand 'better what she was observing in the studio after the public performance.' Taking it in isolation, as I am here, such a comment seems to refer to a process by which an observer works interpretatively to correlate what was observed in rehearsal to what was spectated in performance. In the present research, I have aimed to orient my approach as observer not explicitly towards performance, but towards the choreographer's perspective(s). In my present enquiry of studio observation, my process of understanding, if it can indeed be described as such, has no level of independence of the kind that seems signalled in Jeyasingh's statement. Reflecting on my writing with Lee, I cannot identify myself as possessing insight other than in the terms of our collaboration. And indeed, our "understanding", if it is such, is possessed asymmetrically; a practice-focused writing will be a different writing for the practitioner concerned than for other readers, for all that the writing may be co-authored.

Observing Lee's rehearsals I was engaged less in trying to understand (for example, determining cause and effect in terms of what is retained in performances) than in wishing to notice "things happening" – how Lee might refer to the piece, how the dancers might ready themselves, their proxemic relations within the rehearsal studio or patterns of non-verbal communication (see, for example, Argyle 1988) – that might later open up discussion with Lee. The unstated hypothesis was that a sympathetic outsider's observations might refocus Lee's reflexive perception of her work with dancers Andrea Buckley, Ruth Spencer and Paula Hampson for *Beached* such that would prompt new insight into aspects of her practice that she might otherwise have passed over as unremarkable. The onus to understanding in our collaboration, therefore, lay with the choreographer.

[F]rom our contrasting viewpoints and degrees of involvement in rehearsal, we were encountering piquantly different memories of the making of *Beached*. Together, we tried to mark and sift layers of decision making, of tactics in collaboration, of associational memory and of the pacing of intervention [...]how, both in and out of the studio, Rosemary and the dancers were searching the ebb and flow of movement improvisation, conversation, nuance and association for elements to net verbally, perceptually and somatically. (Lee and Pollard 2006)

In this chapter, therefore, I propose and then proceed to problematise an aspiration to a collaborative practitioner-theoretical writing of dance-making by a choreographer with a researcher based on an immersed engagement in dance-making and an inventive engagement in writing. Such an approach is conceptually at variance with the critical modes characteristic of dominant discourse formations in Dance and Performance Studies as surveyed in *On 'Writing' and 'Reading'*. It was in the course of observing Lee and other choreographers at work, that I formalised a research objective, theorised in the present chapter, of developing my observation of studio practices in writing that was *omni-attentive*, responsive to issues of *time and change* in the creation of a new dance work, and *(auto-)reflexive*, for example with regard to its writerly tools of judgement, to my disciplinary and socio-cultural formation as a writer and my motivated engagement as observer.

My conception of such writing was broadly informed by my participation in CellBytes 2001, a creative research intensive into telematics organised by shinkansen (www.shinkansen.co.uk) and ResCen, in which group-devised strategies were used to try to register and reflect on creative processes in action, producing documentation that was multi-voiced and multi-sourced (available at www.rescen.net). The aspiration to time-sensitive approaches to observing dance-making operates as an epistemic intervention in the present research which further exposes the contrast between spectator-understandings of product and practitioner-understandings of process (Melrose, forthcoming). My conviction in the importance of time-sensitive observation is indebted to the insights of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu writing in the early 1970s (these were taken up by Melrose (1994) and elsewhere):

To substitute *strategy* for the *rule* is to reintroduce time, with its rhythm, its orientation, its irreversibility. (Bourdieu, 1st published in French 1972, 2000:9)

The aspiration to “omni-attentive” writing is drawn from Natalie Crohn Schmitt’s 1990 account of spectating: ‘each of us is capable of multiple (and contradictory)

perceptions at one time. We are omniattentive' (Schmitt 1990:233). My writing of dance-making practices then seeks in turn to articulate my omni-attentive capacity as an observer.

The intention that the writing be (auto-)reflexive is informed by feminist epistemology's examination of 'situated knowledge' as reflective, for example, of a subject's space-time location, emotions, values, cognitive style and relation to others present (Anderson 2004). In the present enquiry, then, I must be alert to the motivated situation in which I access and produce knowledge, and the likely impact on the form this knowledge takes and on the basis of its claims to authority (c.f. Jacques Derrida's autoreflexive writing of multiple, motivated knowledge-positions in 'To speculate – on "Freud"' (1985) which enacted the terms of its analysis, as Freud's own account did).

Art and architectural historian Miwon Kwon, however, has more recently questioned 'the concern for a self-reflexive practice, wherein the situated and motivated position of the ethnographer him/herself is highlighted as an integral part of the production of knowledge'. Following, Foucault's critique of authorship (1977) and the subsequent difficulty of claiming 'the self as witness or author' (Kwon 2000:75&77), Kwon continued:

[T]he concept of participant observation encompasses a relay between an empathetic engagement with a particular situation and/or event (experience) and the assessment of its meaning and significance within a broader context (interpretation). (Kwon 2000:75)

The relay that Kwon described between experience and interpretation is fundamental to the ways I might both attempt to account in formal writing for my observations in a choreographer's rehearsal studio and to contribute to a co-authored writing with a choreographer focused on dance practice. The challenge for the present enquiry, in ethical terms specific to a new mode of writing, would lie in determining an appropriate 'broader context' of interpretation if the 'context' of dance-making is relationally structured and indeterminable (Derrida 1971, accessed 25/4/06). I have returned, that is, to the question raised at the start of this section: how and for whom is there a writing of dance practice?

Processes of writing collaboration with Rosemary Lee, Part 2

Beached, a commonplace book (Appendix)

In 2002, I observed Lee working with the dancers of 'Ch4pter,' Andrea Buckley, Ruth Spencer and Paula Hampson in a late phase of rehearsals for what was to become *Beached*, a dance work performed in North West England in spring 2002 then reworked and toured in 2005-2006. While watching in rehearsal, I made notes in a journal that I later edited and re-worked, although predominantly retaining the initial fragmentary form.

Lee and I sought to continue our collaboration that had begun with the *Passage* website in a less technically complex project and which explored other modes than the artist interview for writing of dance-making. We began by reading over one another's rehearsal notebooks, making comments on our responses in the margins. *Beached: a commonplace book* eventually emerged as a selection of extracts and annotations from these notebooks. (The reader is here advised to turn to the copy of the book, included as Appendix to this thesis, before reading my reflections on its making that are contained in this chapter.) Our intention was that the gathered fragments of writing would suggest something of, for example, the experience, attitudes and skills by which Lee worked with Buckley, Spencer and Hampson. Questions remain, as this chapter considers, as to the research value of publishing extracts from an artist's notebook, written perhaps rapidly and inattentively, with reference to a particular situation, then put aside; notes now often obscure even to the artist and not intended to have a life beyond its studio practice.

The opportunity of extended collaboration with a choreographer such as Lee has reflexively precipitated developments to my writing practice to meet her dedicated engagement in our writing and exacting attention to detail. If I have generally produced each first draft of an article or edited interview, by her responses and in dialogue the writing has always been extensively redrafted and refined before publication. In the first section of this chapter, I theorised my research stance as affirmative of a choreographer if the writing was to succeed. Correspondingly, an affirmative stance on Lee's part, of trust and positive expectation, was equally crucial to the collaboration. My sense is that through the process of observing a series of rehearsals for *Passage* and finalising the reflective website, I became as it were

“apprenticed” to Lee’s practice in terms of cultivating a sense, for example, of her values, interests, modes of description and reference. On the basis of this we could work together by what linguist Neil Mercer might characterise as ‘cumulative talk’ from his research into situations in which speakers can in a ‘mutually supportive, uncritical way construct shared knowledge and understanding’ (Mercer 2000:31).

We experienced more uncertainty developing the writing however as to readership. To put it in terms of Kwon’s analogy to a relay, noted previously, Lee and I were concerned that our writing was angled too far towards experience at the expense of interpretation, jeopardising the viability of the collaboration as a research process dedicated to generating original disseminable knowledge. For example, a section of my rehearsal journal is reproduced in *Beached: a commonplace book* as follows:

What are the bags of words that Rosemary mentions when they work on improvised sections? It reminds me of bagged ‘words for the day’ carried in *Gulliver’s Travels* and I become curious about how and why movement material is named in the studio.

The dancers work on Striding Out, Washing the Sky and Lapping; are these names descriptions or instructions?

Or are they relics that persuade of a talismanic link to the (remembered) clarity of material’s first invention? Poetic names to persuade – or re-invoke – an imaginative ‘breadth’ for the piece once structuring is solved?

Lee’s marginal comments on my notebook entry are as follows:

“We wrote on slips of paper the names of every bit, every gesture of material that the dancers had, and kept them in individual bags. I was worried that I might miss things out, that detailed movement fragments were becoming scattered. Having these bags meant that I could lay all the material out in front of me. I was also inviting the dancers to be involved in the structuring; for example, to suggest which fractional movements that they could do during another’s solo.”

“They are both descriptions and instructions.”

“Perhaps they are talismans, but it seems more functional. That these things need names.”

Was this level of observation and explanation of sufficient interest to a reader? A different kind of publication might have elaborated on how and why movement material is named by dancers and choreographers. For example, we might have wished to argue that the names function for the dancers as new metaphors to ‘to give common knowledge a culturally robust, memorable form. Participants in conversations may

take them up and develop them further as ways of modelling reality' (Mercer 2000:173). We might have conceptualised the names as marking what Knorr Cetina might term the *partial* objects of Lee's epistemic practice (Knorr Cetina 2001:183).

[A] stable name is not an expression and indicator of stable thinghood. Rather, naming, in the present conception, is a way to punctuate the flux, to bracket and ignore differences, declare them as pointing to an identity-for-a-particular purpose. I tend to think that one can see a stable name for a sequence of unfolding objects as a way of translating between different time zones among others personal and institutional time zones (Knorr Cetina 2001:184)

It might have been possible to trace how a name might be a contraction of a first descriptive phrase that Lee gave to a moment of improvised movement which she wished a dancer to try to recover and retain. That name might in the course of rehearsal, refer at different times to a complex body of semi-improvised material or to a precisely rehearsed series of movements. We might have speculated as to whether such names invited thematic interpretation in terms of *Beached* in performance. These avenues of interpretative elaboration were, however, beyond the scope of the publication we envisaged.

'I begin to feel as if the piece has two lives'

One example of how we negotiated the balance of experience to interpretation lies in our account of the relation of *Beached* the dance performance to *Beached: a commonplace book*. The book's introduction comments that, '[r]eflecting on the making of one work, a second work emerged here that is a subtle shadow of the first':

Caught in the covers of the book is the dust of images, hunches and memories that Lee used to make *Beached*, but which have been swept clean from the work as performed.

One layer of writing in the book belongs to what Lee and I conceived of as a voice 'of the piece, as writing that more poetically signalled the qualities of *Beached* as Lee had been imagining it when she was writing in rehearsal. Lee was reluctant, as I understand it, to include performance photographs in the book, arguing that they would present the reader with a too concrete and so paradoxically inadequate realisation of what they would otherwise imagine from the words. There followed, however, recurrent exchanges with our editor, designer and with readers of early drafts about the presence of this third voice. These exchanges may indicate a writerly misjudgement on our part, however our hope was that an effective design could carry our original intention.

Responses to this ‘third voice’, spoken neither by Lee nor I, turned, it seemed to me, on the relationship a reader perceived between the book and performance. Lee and I discussed the writing as marking how, when writing the book, Lee had reread her notebooks and so revisited her earlier imaginings of the piece she might make. To this extent, our writing had a performative aspiration of the kind Peggy Phelan describes: ‘I want this writing to enact the affective force of the performance event again’ (Phelan 1997:12). However the force we wanted to enact was not that of *Beached* as it came to be made and performed but rather of *Beached* as Lee had once imagined and which both does and does not coincide with *Beached* when she sees it performed by Hampson, Buckley and Spencer. The difficulty for a reader however may be to make sense of this third voice with only limited photographic traces of Lee’s choreographic “signature” (Melrose 2005c) and without having, as I have, been present in rehearsal.

The difficulty readers have reported in reading drafts of *Beached: a commonplace book* may indicate too a resistance from those who did not participate in a process of choreographing to accept that the piece performed may not represent for the choreographer either the culmination or completion of creative ideas or impressions that she was working with. If the dance performance is in epistemic terms a partial object, so too is *Beached: a commonplace book*, although the relation between them is not that of a simple series.

Other choreographers have described having divergent impressions or conceptions of their works. In interview, in one example, Siobhan Davies described how when making a piece it is as if it also has an ‘other life, which is eventually the finished piece’. Her sense of a piece’s ‘other life’ would appear to relate to the notion in *Beached* that there is a thread of writing that suggests an “echo” of *Beached* as Lee was imagining it, but which has a complex, undecidable relation to the piece as performed. (Lee once suggested to me that *Beached: a commonplace book* speaks from a foundation or sea of the possibilities from which the performance *Beached* emerged as one configuration. Email to author, July 2006) For Davies, this other life relates to the finished piece, although, as she describes below, production issues may necessitate ‘very brutal decisions about what is best for the entire piece’. Is it a marker of choreographic experience that she can simultaneously be aware of the piece existing partially in different, always incomplete manifestations, as theorised by Knorr Cetina (2001:183), yet also be able to make decisions based on her grasp of ‘the entire piece’ as a singular, yet to be realised entity?

I thought it was clear and then I finished the piece, I looked at it in the studio and I was worried it wasn't there[...] I begin to feel as if the piece has two lives. It has its practical life that is being made and the other life, which is eventually the finished piece. There are still shocks, because you go on stage and most of the movement can be seen, but in juxtaposition to light and sound and set there are still threats, the ever-constant threats of one thing dominating more than the other. And then you have a very short period of time on stage in which to make very brutal decisions about what is best for the entire piece. (Clarke 1998:60-61)

The account I am giving of a piece existing through multiple 'lives', as a series of partial and incomplete objects raises questions as to the research value of *Beached: a commonplace book*. Knowledge objects produced in a rehearsal process might be 'conceived of as unfolding structures of absences: as things that continually 'explode' and 'mutate' into something else, and that are as much defined by what they are not (but will, at some point have become) than by what they are' (Knorr Cetina 2001:182). *Beached: a commonplace book* reproduces extracts from several such partial objects - Lee's notebook, memories of events in the studio - but not so as to document them, but to follow a different unfolding of possibility, as writing for a book, than their first unfolding in a process of dance-making. What is the research status of our secondary unfolding?

[S]ome of the things that I might talk about now are very important to us as process, but the evidence of this work does not necessarily need to be clear by the time we reach the finished piece. (Clarke 1998:51)

Reading *Beached: a commonplace book*, one may have an imagining of what would come to be performed, even as Lee did whilst writing in her rehearsal journal. However, the relation between such an imagining and a spectator's perception and interpretation of a particular performance of *Beached* danced by Hampson, Spencer and Buckley is un-decidable.

In his introduction to a collection of essays concerned with relations of expression and content following Deleuze and Guattari's *a thousand plateaus* (1980 in French, 1987 in English), Brian Massumi described how:

A tracing approach overlays the product onto the process on the assumption that they must be structurally homologous [...] Any potential the process may have had of leading to a significantly different product is lost in the overlay of what already is. (Massumi 2002b:xviii)

By the fact that *Beached* exists as a performance work and that *Beached: a commonplace book* is partially composed as extracts from Lee's choreographic notebook, it might be argued that our book is symptomatic of the *tracing* approach that Massumi critiques. That is, the notebook extracts would be expected to perform a documenting function, contributing to performance interpretations of the dance work (the 'what already is') by increasing understanding of the "context" in which the work was created. Yet the tracing became inverted when Lee engaged creatively, inventively and epistemically in the process of making the book.

[Beached: a commonplace book] is for me like another piece of art. It feels like it is born of the same palette of influences and qualities, but it is another version of the same piece. It is not a reflection of the performance, it is another piece, and in that sense feels a very creative enterprise. In writing it, it has turned out to be a piece in written form, rather than a dance. (Lee in Lee and Pollard 2004)

As Lee described it, *Beached: a commonplace book* is another mode or version of the creative process that in the first situation, with Chapter led, to a dance work. Or rather, 'is like'; the relation is signalled, then qualified and so drawn back from. The book is and is not an outcome distinct from the performance work. Partial objects retained from rehearsal and defined at that time 'by what they are not (but will, at some point have become' (Knorr Cetina 2001:182) have been overlain onto what in some sense they *did* become, at the time of reading, by the fact that *Beached* exists as a performance work (for all that, in epistemic terms, it is one which is still partial and incomplete, Knorr Cetina 2001:182).

This chapter has not engaged systematically Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the referential function of language which Massumi's writing reviewed. From the perspective of philosophy my citation may therefore be problematic, however what I wish to acknowledge is that Massumi's account illuminated my reflections on our writing in relation to the making of *Beached*. For example, Massumi's words below make it possible for me to argue that *Beached: a commonplace book* might enable a reader to have insight into a dance work such as *Beached* from a practitioner's perspective as one which is always incomplete, mutable, an 'endlessly unfolding project' (Knorr Cetina 2001:182). In these terms, *Beached: a commonplace book* might be understood as a motor driving a re-conceptualising:

For a re-articulation of this kind to eventuate, for anything new to arise in the social field, established forms of content and expression must give of themselves. They shed functions, like so many seeds in search of new soil, or like branches for the grafting. It is of their cobbled-together nature to do so: to disseminate. And it is the inconstant nature of their sheddings to mutate as they disseminate. This mutational dissemination of transplantable functions is an instance of what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'deterritorialisation'. (Massumi 2002b: xix-xx)

Lee: [M]y notebook is a reflection of the gathering of images and qualities and hunches and ideas. I suppose [*Beached: a commonplace book*] is a way for me of making those images and ideas live in words and in one's imagination, and when the dance comes into being it is not so much that I have sifted through and thrown things out, it is that things become more abstract, less seen. Somehow, finding another form that holds somehow those first images that are so rich and detailed for me was a revelation. And I can't do that in the dance. The dance transforms those images. (Lee in Lee and Pollard 2004)

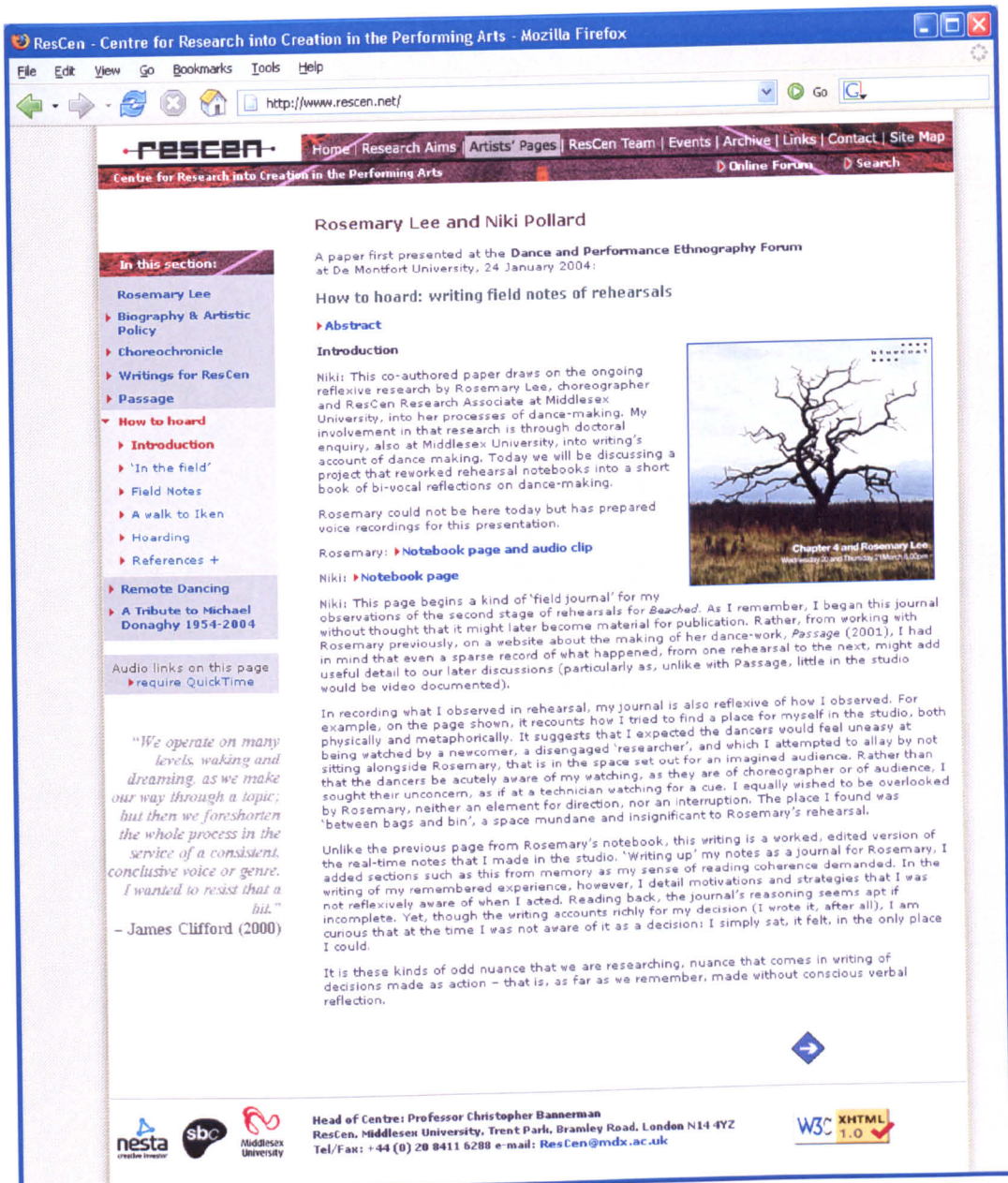


Fig. 8 Home page from Rosemary Lee and Niki Pollard's 'How to Hoard: writing fieldnotes of rehearsals' (2004). Web design by Andrew Lang. www.rescen.net

Writing with Lee: 'How to hoard: writing field notes of rehearsals' (on Appendix CD-ROM)

It is recommended that the reader now access Lee's pages of the ResCen website on the Appendix CD-ROM (*In Proximity*) so as to read the co-authored presentation 'How to hoard: writing field notes of rehearsals' (Lee and Pollard 2004) before continuing with the chapter. 'How to hoard' was a presentation was given at a Dance Ethnography Forum at de Montfort University in 2004 and subsequently published on the ResCen website. In the presentation we described how we were working on what was to become *Beached, a commonplace book* (2006) providing commentary on selected pages from Lee's choreographic notebook and my rehearsal journal.

In the presentation, we examined how our project might in certain respects be conceptually framed by critical ethnographic attention since the mid 1980s to the motivated, partial situation of what is termed here as a 'researcher-observer', identified neither as participant nor outsider. Ethnographer Sarah Pink, for example, has in the last five years argued for a reflexive approach that interrogates the techniques for textually constructing subjects, readers and researchers in writing, and that 'recognises the centrality of the subjectivity of the researcher to the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge (Pink 2001:19).

The reflexive attention to textuality characteristic of critical anthropology can be traced to shifts in ethnography centred on the publication in 1986 of *Writing Culture*, edited by James Clifford and George Marcus. As Clifford himself commented in interview, 'By the late 1980s it was inescapable that anthropological fieldwork would never again be a matter of an outsider scholar interrogating insider natives and emerging with neutral, authoritative knowledge' (Coles 2000:58). It should be noted, however, that Clifford in the same interview asserted that changes in anthropological practice were 'more profoundly because of pressures from decolonisation and feminism' than from a post-structuralist critique, an analysis which I acknowledge but which lies beyond the scope of the present research. (Coles 2000:58).

The lessons of ethnographic reflexivity are significant to the present study, highlighting, for example, that an ethnographer learns to experience 'events as potential subjects for writing' (Emerson et al 1995:35). Consequently, a reflexive ethnographer must be alert to how s/he actively constructs an account (that is, an

interpretation) in their field notes, selectively including or excluding certain details, processing her or his experience to the writing style adopted: 'In fieldwork, then, events and actions become meaningful in light of an emerging meaningful whole [...]the continuously analytic character of fieldwork' (Emerson et al 1995:168). The analytic modes of an ethnographer and the account s/he constructs are produced within a framework of anthropological knowledge. Prompted by these shifts towards reflexive writing in anthropology, Lee and I began to reflect on the habits, assumptions, constraints and perspectives that governed why, what and how we wrote in our different notebooks:

Lee: What can't I write about in a notebook? It is true there are definitely areas that I can't put into words. Those would be probably be quite long dance phrases and I do resort to little pictures, but often the little pictures don't work [...]So if I can find a word that is like a signpost for a huge net of images or passages of dance, then that is great. But I think, as I get older, those signposting words sometimes don't trigger my brain in the same way that they used to, so I am constantly struggling for the right kinds of words, and the right kinds of writing, that doesn't get in the way of the process in the studio and somehow reflects, is a kind of shorthand for me [...] like you reduce a sauce, and you get down to the strongest taste. You get rid of all the water, you evaporate all the bit that you don't need and you get to the strongest flavour. So I suppose those words are like poetry, those words have the strongest flavour, but they allow me the space – the water, the bit that has gone – in my head, when I read that word, then I have the space again. (Lee speaking, Lee and Pollard 2004)

I might draw furthermore from anthropological writing to assess the collaborative relationship between Lee and myself that was examined earlier in the chapter in responses to the *Passage* projects. For example:

There is surely no other form of scholarly enquiry in which relationships of intimacy and familiarity between researcher and subject are envisioned as a fundamental medium of investigation rather than as an extraneous by-product or even an impediment. This onus towards comradeship, however incompletely and sporadically achieved, provides a vantage point imbued at once with significant analytical advantages as well as poignant dilemmas of ethics[...]However sincere and nuanced the attachments they express, ethnographic fieldworkers are still also exploiting this intimacy as an investigative tool. (Amit 2000:3)

Anthropological approaches can be brought to bear on the present study in respects other than of reflexive writing practices. In the extract below from his seminal 1975 *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz interrogated the 'actor-oriented' focus of anthropological interpretation⁴⁷:

Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity [...] It is this manoeuvre, usually too casually referred to as "seeing things from the actor's point of view," too bookishly as "the *verstehen* approach," or too technically as "emic analysis" [...] Nothing is more necessary to comprehending what anthropological interpretation is, and the degree to which it *is* interpretation, than an exact understanding of what it means – and of what it does not mean – to say that our formulations of other people's symbol systems must be actor-oriented. (Geertz 1975:14)

Central to the present study too are questions as to the possibility of dance practitioner-oriented writing that participates in university economies of Dance Studies knowledge. The production of such writing calls for ceaseless negotiation and examination of its means and ends as an interpretative project. For example, the present study must mark a thorough separation from the anthropological discourse that notionally informs it. An ethnographer might have been invited to observe Lee's rehearsals and write of dance-making processes. However, to frame my presence in rehearsal as 'participant-observation' would produce my identity as researcher as an authoritative, dispassionate and interpreting agent, generalising "knowledge" from the "experience" of a choreographer as ethnographic object.

My modes of observing and working with choreographers have many points of similarity to the activities of ethnographers, yet my research is not ethnographic, even allowing for recent debate and increasing application of the term, since its knowledge objectives are not those of social studies. Martyn Hammersley recently commented on 'a degree of eclecticism on the part of many who call themselves ethnographers'. He concluded however that:

Despite all this, we can identify a methodological orientation that can reasonably be treated as central to ethnography [...] I will take the term to refer to a form of social and educational research that emphasises the importance of studying *at first hand* what people do and say in particular contexts[...] and] coming to understand the perspectives of the people being studied if we are to explain, or even to describe accurately, the activities they engage in and the courses of action they adopt. At the same time, there is usually an equal emphasis on developing an *analytic* understanding of perspectives, activities and actions, one that is likely to be different from, perhaps even in conflict with, how the people themselves see the world. (Hammersley 2006:4)

While the present research might be said to study '*at first hand* what people do and say in particular contexts', its '*analytic* understanding' will not be produced with respect to anthropological knowledge and any conflict with 'how the people themselves see the

world' must be theorised rather than, as in Hammersley's account normalised as 'likely'.

The epistemic status of a dance practitioner-oriented writing of dance-making is fundamentally at question then in the present research, presenting ethical and writerly questions as to how and who can write of dance-making and for what readers. Recent writings in critical anthropology debate the value and possibility of what is variously termed 'native', 'insider' or 'auto' anthropology but cannot evade the position that to produce writing within the discipline of anthropology, an anthropologist 'should be prepared to cast their studies in terms of ethnographic objectives and professional discourses that should be expected to be distinct from those employed locally' (Dyck 2000:35). A requirement to cast the present study in terms of Dance Studies objectives, however, would seem to negate the possibility of this project: as was discussed in the survey of *On 'Writing' and 'Reading'*, Dance Studies may be regarded as presently a spectator rather than dance-practitioner oriented discipline which in writing of creative practices will necessarily objectify them and claim explanatory power over a creative practitioner's account. From the perspective of anthropology, then, the 'subjects of anthropological enquiry [may] have their own self-referential discourse and projects of self-realisation that exist alongside ethnographic writing and the anthropological project of self-transcendence' (Dyck 2000:35, with reference to Kirsten Hastrup's 'Writing Ethnography: state of the art' in Okely, J. & Callabway, H. (1992) *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London and New York, Routledge, 118-133, 121)).

Ethnographers have described their ethical negotiations of "othering" in ways that can be brought to elucidate the present enquiry. For example, ethnographer Sarah Pink wrote that:

My intention was to work "with" rather than on my "informants"/ friends/ colleagues and to interpret our discussions as the sites of the production of knowledge. In doing so I would not pretend to avoid what Hastrup calls 'the inherent process of "othering" in anthropology.' Through our self-reflection both my "informants" and I "othered" ourselves by attempting to stand "outside" of and consider our situations and experiences "anthropologically." (Pink 2000:102. Cites Hastrup, K.1995, *A Passage to Anthropology: between experience and theory*, London, Routledge,159)

Anthropologist and discourse analyst Mary Louise Pratt, for example, suggested that reflexive ethnographers be alert to the knowledge position from which they write:

In terms of its own metaphors, the scientific position of speech is that of an observer fixed on the edge of a space, looking in and/or down upon what is other. Subjective experience, on the other hand, is spoken from a moving position already within or down in the middle of things, looking and being looked at. (Pratt 1986:32)⁴⁸

However, the question of “othering” has a different force in the present study than in anthropology since it aspires to engage with dance-making practices as already theoretical (which to date the discourses of Dance Studies as surveyed in *On ‘Writing’ and ‘Reading’* have for the most part not). The reflections of a choreographer then cannot necessarily be dismissed from the research as in Dyck’s phrase merely ‘projects of self-realisation’ lacking wider interpretative force. A theoretical engagement in professional and inventive choreographic processes that is not oriented to the experience of dance-makers will therefore fail to account for the individuality of such a process. As David MacDougall commented of anthropology:

[A]lthough the raw unit of anthropological study remains the individual, the individual must be left by the wayside on the roads to the general principle. (Devereaux & Hillman 1995:219)

The impact of dance ethnographic scholarship on approaches to studio observation

I am not alone in turning to anthropological writing to inform a dance enquiry. Gay Morris observed in the mid 1990s that the ‘concept of the researcher as a participant/observer has been particularly helpful to dance scholars. Many researchers are dancers themselves, and how to deal with the scholar’s own dancing body is often a subtext’ (Morris, 1996:8). Dance ethnography additionally exists as a disciplinary subset of Dance Studies as represented, for example, by the writings of Theresa Buckland (1999) and Helena Wulff (2000).

Dance scholar Sally Ann Ness has examined how the ‘activity of objectifying (i.e., creating a conceptual object out of) dance cross-culturally has had and continues to have practical, ethical, and theoretical consequences for the field of study’ (Ness 1996:245). In the mid 1990s, she analysed ethnographies by leading social anthropologist E.E.Evans-Pritchard of the late 1920s and by three dance scholars: Judith Lynne Hanna, Avanthi Meduri and Adrienne Kaeppler. I am concerned here

with Ness' account of Kaeppler's argument, drawing on her fieldwork with the Tonga in the 1970s and 1980s, that "dance" is an ethnocentric concept which distorts 'the study of practices of cultures in which it does not originate'. According to Ness, Kaeppler found, however, that she could continue to use the term "dance" to:

elicit emic representations of practitioners' experiences[...] What Tongan dancers recognize as significant in their "dance" becomes knowable through this dialogue regarding the etic objectifications and their emic constructions and interpretations. (Ness 1996:259)

While the present research is not cross-cultural in anthropological terms (and does not aim as Kaeppler's may have done, at a systematic (textualised) description of dance), I might wish to make a cross-practice argument for similarity. Lacking a practitioner's understanding of dance-making, then, I could be said to (mis)apply "choreography" as a concept in my writing. A practitioner's understanding of the "choreography" in principle might be opened up in dialogue with a choreographer that aimed, 'at least in theory' as Ness described, to give Tongan cultural discourse, or in the present undertaking a choreographer's discourse 'the last conceptual word'(Ness 1996:258).

An "ethnographic turn" (Foster 1996:183)

Hal Foster, in a chapter entitled 'The artist as ethnographer', referred to Walter Benjamin's 1934 lecture, 'The Author as Producer' as a crucial intervention 'in the relation between artistic authority and cultural politics' (Foster 1996:171) and marked how it had been responded to by artists and critics in the 1970s and then, differently, in the 1980s. Foster suggested that 'a new paradigm structurally similar to the old "Author as Producer" model has emerged in advanced art on the left: *the artist as ethnographer*' (Foster 1996:172), that is of a shift in art theoretical practices into the 1990s 'from a subject defined in terms of *economic relation* to one defined in terms of *cultural identity*' (Foster 1996:173). He took the work of James Clifford to be exemplary of how:

[S]ome critics of anthropology developed a kind of artist envy[...] In this envy the artist became a paragon of formal reflexivity, a self-aware reader of *culture understood as text*. [...] Might this artist envy be a self-idealisation in which the anthropologist is remade as an artistic interpreter of the cultural text? (Foster 1996:180)

According to Foster, critical anthropology represented ‘the science of *alterity*’ (Foster 1996:182) to critical discourse and artistic practice which ‘promises a reflexivity of the ethnographer at the centre even as it preserves a romanticism of the other at the margins’ (Foster 1996:182). Consequently, he argued, in an “ethnographic turn”, literary critics had adopted anthropology’s model of culture as text to ‘reformulate texts as cultures writ small’ (Foster 1996:183).

In an interview published 2001, James Clifford reflected in political terms on the ‘appeal of ‘ethnographic’ dispositions across a wide range of activities’:

For those representing marginal, or populist, modes of life and expression it offered a place, albeit circumscribed, in the wider, public debates. And for those coming from sites of relative privilege there was, and is, a genuine openness to a broader world of popular non-Western possibilities and agencies here. (Coles 2000:56)

Clifford situated Foster’s earlier critique as a reaction to ethnography’s ‘sometimes uncritical popularity in art practices of the early 1990s’ (Coles 2000:56) and challenged the dismissal of ‘the new anthropology’ as ‘textualism and hyper reflexivity’. His intention when for example he wrote *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) was to argue, he said, not for ‘reducing everything to text’ but ‘that the space of cultural representations is populated by differently situated authorities, producers, not simply conduits, of self-reflexive ‘cultural’ knowledge’ (Coles 2000:57).

For the purposes of the present study, then, I have aimed at developing an “ethnographic” disposition in observing choreographers at work as Clifford characterised it: ‘a willingness to look[...] with extended, critical and self-critical attention, with a curiosity about particularity and a willingness to be decentred in acts of translation’ (Coles 2000:56). Simultaneously, however, Foster’s analysis alerts me to the dangers, as he described them, ‘of too little or too much distance’ from a choreographer’s practice. Foster’s response was to recommend ‘parallactic work that attempts to frame the framer as he or she frames the other’ (Foster 1996:203). It might be possible to theorise *Beached: a commonplace book* in terms of a parallax analogy with the exchange of notes that takes place between Lee and myself in the margins of the extracts from one another’s notebooks, and hence an alternating movement in a reader’s grasp of that extract.

A further example might be when I wrote in my observer's notebook: 'I try to resist a spectator's position of separation and judgment, yet, when I see the piece finally in performance, I realise that I am not watching from the audience for the first time' (Lee and Pollard 2006). I was writing of how I anticipated having two points of view on *Beached*, attentive in rehearsal to the unfolding, partial objects of an epistemic practice, and in performance, to a dance which constitutes a pause in the unfolding (Melrose 2003-4); when I did see *Beached* in performance, I realised that the times and modes of watching were more entangled. Yet, the parallax analogy explanation of change here only allows for movement of the observer's viewpoint. I am suggesting, following Melrose and Knorr Cetina, that the knowledge-objects and relations observed as *Beached* are themselves also changed by movement from rehearsal to performance. The parallax analogy is limiting to the present research then since it would theorise a static, persistent identity for the performance object which is apparently displaced or seen in a new "context" because of a change in position of the observer. This definition defaults to an orientation to spectator-specific understandings of product rather than to the orientation to practitioner-understandings of process to which my enquiry aims.

A different approach to an 'ethnographic turn', published in the same year as Foster's critique, may be more productive to my enquiry. Anthropologist Paul Rabinow surveyed Bourdieu's conviction that social actors 'must believe in the illusion that they are pursuing something genuinely meaningful in order to act' (Rabinow 1996:9).

Bourdieu's pages *are* unquestionably tinged with sympathy and solidarity for the people he analyzes. Bourdieu's personal sentiments, sincere and noble though they may be, however, have no scientific role to play in his system. They remain private, personal, accidental – ultimately unreflective and unreflected. (Rabinow 1996:12)

Bourdieu's own practice, Rabinow argued, is subject then to the blind-spot he analyses in others' practices. In contrast, Rabinow proposed a conception of ethnography that might acknowledge a researcher's experience of 'sympathy and solidarity for the people he analyzes'. He discussed certain of his own ethnographic exchanges with predominantly professional scientists who otherwise have few institutional outlets 'to explain what they are doing, how they came to do it, and what they think and feel about doing it'. Rabinow's descriptions of these exchanges are valuable to my research as an account of why an ethnographer's subjects entered into a research relation with

him or her, and on the utility of the research from their perspective. Anthropology has recognised that a researcher's relationships 'in the field' determine the nature of their research material, for example:

The scope of activities which an ethnographer can observe and in which s/he can participate, his/her vantage point and premise of involvement are contingent on the nature of the relationships s/he is able to form with those engaged in these situations (Amit 2000:1-2)

Analysis of these relationships, however, I would argue, has tended to be configured in terms of the ethnographer whereas a key concern of my own project has been the possibility that a researcher's relationship with a choreographer might have a (differentiated) epistemic outcome for choreographer as well as researcher:

[I]t became clear to me that I was not expected to play an expert role of analyzing them [the scientists] sociologically, nor a therapeutic role of helping them "work through" problems, nor a denunciatory role of identifying malevolent forces and actors, but a problematizing role, one in which having an observer status allowed a certain overview of the situation, including its fluidity. Such a mode of subjectivation requires the ethical work of being attentive to one's own resentments, of claiming neither mastery nor ignorance, of publicly balancing identification and distance. (Rabinow 1996:21-22)

Rabinow's writing is unusual too in his account of why certain research encounters fail:

As in all such work, there were any number of other encounters – with people in identical structural positions – that never really "took." When things did click, there was a supplement, an aroused autocuriosity. This quality was a dispositional diacritic; some people live that way. The challenge was to put that reflected curiosity to work[...] to forge research techniques that would help extend their practice to enrich my own. (Rabinow 1996:xii)

During the course of the present study I several times experienced an encounter with a choreographer 'that never really "took".' On one such occasion, I had committed myself to producing writing based on my observation of this choreographer at work. I would argue that it is significant that, in the research situation where a choreographer and I did not seem to experience a reciprocal rapport, the writing failed in its attempt to articulate a choreographer-oriented account of dance-making. Following Rabinow, my sense is that the failure of rapport between us could be analysed as a mismatch of disposition, one in part cultivated by our engagement in contrasted dance disciplines.

The unfolding of the research project with this choreographer underlined for me the ethical complexity of my overall enquiry. The intention behind the project was that I work collaboratively with another research assistant and the choreographer to produce a website focused on the choreographer's perspective on the making of the dance which I and the other research assistant at intervals had observed and video documented over a period of rehearsal. After initial meetings and interviews, I and the other research assistant sent drafted text for a website to the choreographer and to the research leader, inviting their responses and contribution. Evidently our material and/or our framing and timing, was misjudged since the choreographer effectively ended our collaboration, responding only briefly to our writing. One or two years later, I discovered by chance that edited extracts from our draft material were included in website that more broadly explored the making of this dance work.

In view of the lack of success of the collaboration, I have not here named the choreographer and project concerned. For the other projects of writing with choreographers, it was vital that I name my co-author, acknowledge the artistic expertise evident in his or her dance works (and which was the premise for our writing) and invite their responses to how I "othered" our collaborative projects by reflecting on them within the present thesis. Did the choreographer feel "othered" by material presented at an advanced drafting stage? (Yet I had not received from her indications that she wished to contribute directly to that drafting.) In the instance of this project, I and the other research assistant were not provided with an opportunity to review, prior to publication, how our material had been edited for a website that was substantially different to the one initially discussed; an oversight that might be viewed as ethical breach. Given the specific difficulties encountered in this project, I felt it important to retain reference to it here within the overall study.

A series of factors may have been at play in the collaboration's failure. Firstly, the project had a more formal framework than my other collaborations with choreographers in that the work was explicitly commissioned by a research centre. In each of my other writing collaborations with choreographers, the first project of writing has, I would argue, tentatively evolved in the course of a growing mutual confidence and trust in our relationship. In the project under discussion, however, there was little opportunity for interpersonal negotiation as to the values, interests and goals of any writing we might produce. A second factor at play, consequent on the first, was that I did not sufficiently consider how the choreographer might experience anxiety

and reticence about the presence and responses of research observers in her rehearsal. I forwarded to the choreographer a copy of my rehearsal journal which I intended, as I remember, as an unpublished record of my observations which might prompt reflection and dialogue with her. I understand now that the choreographer may have been discomforted to read herself “othered” in this journal as a subject of observation. She might therefore have felt herself to be subjected to research observation, rather than invited to engage as co-author in producing those observations. Lee has elsewhere commented that it ‘is very strange – frightening, as well as affirming, both like a treasure hunt and a dissection – to have your work looked at as you do, to hear the connections that you saw and to realize how embedded my practice is’ (Lee and Pollard 2004).

I had attempted in my rehearsal journal, reflexive writing such as this chapter has proposed, alert to its tools of judgement, to my socio-cultural production and to my previous experiences of both dance and of observing. My judgment now is that these reflections were important to me, informing my overall enquiry, but could not have functioned affirmatively for the choreographer. Selective extracts from my journal were in fact reproduced on the published website, framed by a critique from the choreographer, a move which appeared to me to be at odds both with an ethics of collaboration and with the objectives of the website (particularly in view of my then inexpert role in the project as student researcher).

Drawing upon Aristotle’s account in *Nicomachean Ethics* of friendship as a virtue, Rabinow proposed ‘that a primary site of thinking is friendship (*philia*)’ (Rabinow 1996:13) that is, that *philia* is ‘an ethical and epistemological *practice*’ (Rabinow 1996:15). The recurring concepts of shared curiosity, disposition and friendship with which Rabinow has characterised his research project have, I would wish to argue, strongly contributed to my continuing and reflexive development of approaches to collaborative writing with choreographers. More recently, Rabinow described his enquiry as follows:

The kind of anthropology I am undertaking does not make ethnic groups its primary objects of study. Rather, as we have seen, it concerns a different range of objects (problematizations, apparatuses, assemblages) and entails a mode that puts the self, in its relationship to itself, to others, and to things, in motion as well as in question. The challenge of form, therefore, is how to bring these diverse aspects together. This challenge includes the practice of inquiry in its experiential dimension. It also includes the dimension of ethnography that I do

want to retain: the writing dimension. The graphē of ethos, logos, and pathos constitutes a privileged site for inquiry and experimentation. (Rabinow 2003:76-77)

If my research performs an ‘ethnographic turn’, therefore, I propose to theorise it not as Foster does, but in Rabinow’s phrase as a ‘mode that puts the self, in its relationship to itself, to others, and to things, in motion as well as in question’ and for which the ‘graphē of ethos, logos, and pathos constitutes a privileged site for inquiry and experimentation’.

Disinter/est: Digging Up Our Childhood

Artist: Joshua Sofaer
Archaeologist: Joanna Sofaer Derencuski

Setting the Scene
On the 1st of August 1972 John Soffer was born in 3418 Road, University Heights in Cambridge. His older sister Joana was about to have her second birthday. On 1 September 1977 the family had left for Lithuania.

In the research project, I immerse/ed, breathe and snore next in Cambridge to explore the city, the places of their childhood, the places they were before they can remember, and have used the practices of archaeology to see if it is possible to understand the forgotten past.

Three years of my sister childhood (in its image) part of myself they are wanted to not I can have nothing of their own – it is not things that suggest future on new lines – from the common ground to their people.

Shirley Price

Archaeology necessitates an experiential narrative, one that is predicated on introspection. The prevalence of psychoanalytic models for the understanding of infancy has resulted in a generic conception of the 'archaeology' of early childhood in terms of psychoanalytic stages. As infancy provides established long term memory, we can not access our own history with the same kinds of hindsight formulation that we would our later childhood, adolescence or young adult life. This experience one that is both self-conscious and of other kinds, that is a rethinking of the relationship between self and archaeology. In tracing the 'same' of infancy we necessarily have to negotiate an understanding that runs counter to tradition.

Archaeologists are interested in investigating the material world and using it to explore the past. Until recently, however, children have rarely figured in archaeological interpretations, although the study of children has important representations for how we understand communities. The inclusion of children within archaeology is

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The collage consists of several black and white film stills arranged in a grid-like fashion. At the top left is a large still showing a man's face in profile, looking out a window. Below it are smaller stills: one of a person lying down, another of a person sitting at a desk, and a third of a person standing. To the right of these are two vertical strips of film frames. Further right is a still of a person walking. Below that is a still of a person sitting at a desk. At the bottom are three more stills: one of a person lying down, another of a person sitting at a desk, and a third of a person standing.

Research Tool 2: Aerial Evidence

Aerial Evidence is an aerial photographic tour was taken on 20th October 1971 at about mid-day. The white circle indicates the house owned by the Senior family on the outskirts of Cambridge. Is the photographer pressed the cable release, Joanna Senior, a 14 month old infant, was probably playing with her toys having just watched the 11 AM recording of The school's victory on 19th 2. Who knows what happened later that evening, but 40 weeks on, her younger brother Joshua was born.

This photograph acts as a quasi record of my father's conception, which must have taken place, probably in this house, within a week of this photograph being shot.

This imagery is thus, the first in a bio-developing story (Joshua's bio-developing) I make up on origin (my father's origin).

[This led Joshua to think about an expanded notion of procreation and heritage.]

[This led Joanna to think about the archaeological investigation of social categories.]

Research Tool 3: The Thing Which Makes Ineffable Known

The Thing Which Makes Ineffable Known tells the story in its own time. When activated it emits a random series of letters which act as input to those of the child. It is a small self-contained fortified machine featuring interactive screen.

Ruminations of the toy which is given to a child to stimulate it. The Thing Which Makes Ineffable Known reminds the adult how a child demands to be stimulated. A suggested use for The Thing Which Makes Ineffable Known is to show it to the child's teacher or when you are preparing to bed. Its random activation will hopefully disturb your sleep pattern and remind you of the randomness ways in which animals often wake, time and routine often change.

[This led Joshua to think about domestic power relations and the supposed passivity of the infant.]

[This led Joanna to think about the visibility and invisibility of the infant, told within the archaeological record.]

Research Tool 4: The Object Biography

The Object Biography attempts to track the life of the pillowcase that was laid out on the table with other objects ready for the enactment and collection of Joanna Senior's recreation in the family home of 1972.

Casting and literary and photographic evidence the life of the pillowcase is written in some detail, from purchase to the present. That narrative includes and acknowledges trans-generational geography, scenes of cultural revival, the pillowcase as heirloom of a host of historical life, and the gateway to the world of dreams.

Joanna Senior, Cambridge University Collection of Photography copyright reserved

Two women selection of The Thing Which Makes Ineffable Known during sleep patterns

The table laid out with objects made for the collection and enactment of Joanna Senior's recreation in the family home days

Bio-developing

The bathroom Photograph

Bathroom sequence by John Singer, camera gone

From an auto-historical perspective, the pillowcase biography affirms the rather linear autobiographical nature of the object biography in terms of objects being handled down from person to person and serves to state a process that has many points of contact at any given moment in time. To take matter, we have one object in contact with many biographies, rather than an object with one singular, easily divisible history. One might also see something similar about personal biography, in that the lives of each and every person are inseparable with the lives of others, and original intentions of biography in terms of what one might call a life-course trajectory - also become fractured through the situation of the individual in a web of relationships.

[This led Joanna to think about a splintered notion of biography as configured throughout the world situated in dreams.]

[This led Joanna to think about how directly construct the lives of people; in particular, the role of objects in mediating this changes.]

Research Tool 5: The Father/Baby Optical Adjuncts

The Father/Baby optical Adjuncts are an odd pair of photographs by John Singer (the father) into his father into his mother into his father. Joanna, Barbara, circular and highly charged, blurring the moral lens but the most extremely delicate example.

While physically affecting the sight of those who view them, in remembrance of the blurred philosophy of vision within, the Father/Baby optical Adjuncts do not act as a symbolic element which reinforces the broken picture of the father's photography within the domestic scene of the family snapshot.

A photograph taken in the family bathroom. Mother and daughter walk the shiny bare soles. Peering into this scene from the perspective of the hidden photographer 20 years after it was taken, the shiny soles reflect the childhood experience.

Children are constructed anthropologically. Illustration John Singer creates a virtual version of the bathroom scene as an attempt to articulate, or re-present, the different viewpoints of three people in the scene at the instant the photograph was taken. The recreation begins by including the photographer, while without concrete evidence, was presented to be the father. Putting him back in the picture literally completes the domestic scene that is otherwise only partial.

Note 5

In an article on the differences between film and photography, Philip Cooper and Daniel Christian Maza says of the photographic subject: "The person who has been photographed, or the total person, is dead, dead for having been seen." Further observation suggests this argument when he describes the being in the photograph as having

look at now, of an event we know to have taken place in that particular space (to the extent that we can ever know anything), and at another there is the recreation of the internal baby-view, the cognition that is not known, that can only be guessed at and never really understood. It is perhaps in the space between these two frames of vision that we can write the 'curiosity' about the domestic moment encapsulated in the bathroom photograph.

In attempting to describe her experience following the death of her father when she was 7 years old – knowing that events took place despite the almost total gap in her memory – Kate Love has articulated a model for experience itself:

... this gap-space between and yet not knowing which, although, and perhaps through, I now also recognise might not be like a new and possibly more adequate interpretation of experience itself.¹

This model reaches the common reading of experience as purely sensory, or on the other hand as entirely in language – that is understood – and places experience at the limit of understanding, as both 'undergoing and interpreting simultaneously'.²

By viewing 'The Father/Daughter Optical Illusions' – to see a bit, as the infant does – is to acknowledge that this blurring, this not quite in focus, is not only an appropriate model for the recreation of infant experience, but it is also one can hope for in the adult attempt to decipher the infant self. Configured as such, the bathroom image of the infant self is not phenomenonic but rather a site for the construction of personal experience. The blurred recreation of infant vision becomes a metaphor for the attempted articulation of the experience of that moment.

Research Tool 6: The Fort/Da Mother Doll

The Fort/Da Mother Doll is a doll modelled on the infant's mother, capturing her actual face, the one of which we now well have been grieving during the years in question.

The Fort/Da Mother Doll allows the now-adult-of-the-infant-child to internalize their mother and explicitly replay the separation trauma observed by Freud in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', discarding and reclaiming its therapeutic limits.



Joshua Sotter replays the separation trauma with The Fort/Da Mother Doll



Bathroom recreation
1. baby's view
2. blurred baby view



Joshua Sotter viewing
The Father/Daughter Optical Illusions



Joshua Sotter demonstrating
The Father/Daughter Optical Illusions



Note 6

Freud famously observes a young child who knew he was in his grandfather's room aged 1½ years threw into his cribbed cot a cotton reel, or good, on a string. It is the throwing gesture the child shows out an 'o-o-o-o' sound which Freud relates to the German word 'fort' meaning 'gone'. The child then pulls back the cotton reel using the string, grasping it with a phallic 'w-a-a-a' which Freud relates to the German word 'da' meaning 'here'.

His conclusion:

The one position of the game has become obvious: it was related to the child's great external satisfaction – the tactical satisfaction that he has succeeded in inducing satisfaction which he had made in allowing his mother to go away without perceiving his complete absence for him, as it was to recall playing the disappearance and return of the object which he needs.³

He later offers an alternative explanation:

The still earlier one position was he attempted throwing away the object so that it was gone right until he began to tire of the doll, which was supposed to be gone like a sample himself on his mother for going away from him, but now it would have a different meaning: 'It's right then, go away I don't need you. The coming now is successful'.⁴

As Derrida observes, it is this section of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' that is 'the one often retained in the analytic, and occasionally the contrary, space of psychoanalysis as one of the most important, and even decisive, chapters of the essay'.⁵ The pervasive application of this kind of psychoanalytic universal – 'Fort as all children – offers the analyst a template for their childhood activity – but it is not one that could be easily 'proved'. The story of the spot has become internalized by psychoanalysis to such a degree that one imagines the observer of a given child to anticipate a one-day 'discovering' the game despite a lack of evidence. And even if predestination can be ruled out that how will you see it unless you are looking for it, and if you are looking for it then you will know about it then such a search would amount to the insurmountable observation and memory. The question of the potential of such an autobiographical moment is not going to be answered by asking these questions for me as a young child if we can completely described and caught out one boy.

The Distance/ret, which looks to explore infancy autobiographically using archaeology, such psychoanalytic readings, while restrictive to their limitations (as Derrida says of the good argument, 'this legend, is already too legendary, overhistorical, obliterated?')⁶ can be a useful way of starting to think about childhood activity within the domestic space.

past in the present as being the present – past as present. Throwing The Fort/Da Mother Doll away and getting it back, is an action of performance in the present which refers to the past – contains it – repeats it – but nevertheless does not become it. It is the past lived as present. Further, it is through an attempted re-playing of the past that one becomes present. It is this performance in J.L. – Anna's case, as that it is through language that the action takes place – for while the event has been staged like the take of the photographic, documentation the action really exists in its being told. For Derrida it is also the act of telling, in the 'scene of writing' that 'beyond the Pleasure Principle' becomes autobiography.

Research Tool 7: The Aeroplane Spoon

The Aeroplane Spoon is a construction of a childhood toy and a childhood feeding implement. It both satiates and a symbolic object. Its satiating properties are clear: it feeds the young child. The Aeroplane Spoon plays the aeroplane game for infantile politics.

Symbolically it references both language and ritual. The child that is born with a silver spoon in their mouth is the child who is born with advantage. To be 'spooned' is to denote responsibility to another. [This led Joshua to think about child rearing handbooks on performance scripts for parents and children. This led Joshua to think about ritual in terms of the every day, rather than the archetypal archetypological understanding of ritual in exception.]



Joshua Sotter being fed with
The Aeroplane Spoon

NOTES

1. Marcel Proust (1960) *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol. 3 'The Guermantes Way', translated by E.V. Rieu, Harmondsworth and Taurus, London: Vintage, p. 3.
2. Christian Hays (1985) 'Photography and Truth', *October* no. 34 (Fall): 31–60.
3. Roland Barthes (1980) *Camera Lucida*, London: Vintage, p. 14.
4. *Ibid.* p. 52.
5. Marcel Proust (1960) *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol. 1 'Swann's Way', translated by E.V. Rieu, Harmondsworth and Taurus, London: Vintage, p. 31.
6. Gilles Deleuze (2000) *Post-Scriptum*, London: The Athlone Press, p. 61.
7. Marcel Proust (1960) *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol. 2 'Within a Solitude', translated by E.V. Rieu, Harmondsworth and Taurus, London: Vintage, p. 412.
8. Marcel Proust (1960) *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol. 1 'Swann's Way', translated by E.V. Rieu, Harmondsworth and Taurus, London: Vintage, p. 400.
9. Kate Love (2000) 'Experience Preferred', in *Experience*, London: Routledge, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.* p. 2.
11. Sigmund Freud (1920) 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Part 2 in Freud (1920) *The Principles of Psychoanalysis*, translated by James Strachey, Middlesex: Hogarth, p. 204.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Jacques Derrida (1982) 'To Speculate – On "Truth"', Chapter 2 'Truth's Legacy', in *The Post-Modern*, translated by Alan Watts, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, p. 204.
14. *Ibid.* p. 204.
15. *Ibid.* p. 136.
16. *Ibid.* p. 132.
17. *Ibid.* p. 138.
18. *Ibid.* p. 131.

5th “research companion”: Joshua Sofaer and Joanna Sofaer Derevenski’s ‘Disinter/est: digging up our childhood’ (on Appendix CD-ROM)

I propose to consider the writing of Joshua Sofaer, artist, writer and research fellow at ResCen, as “research companion” to the present enquiry since it evidences an ongoing interest in relations of performance, writing and research, for example with *Joshua Sofaer, a biography by Margaret Turner* (1997), a bookshop performance and installation involving the sale of a blank-paged biography; *The Performance Pack* (2004), a limited edition artwork that is also a pack for preparing a performance lecture; and his PhD in Performance Writing (2005). Sofaer’s work includes extensive publications and performances, events and exhibitions worldwide including London’s ICA and Tate Modern (details at www.joshuasofaer.com).

My responses here focus on two papers published in *Performance Research* that have an unusual relation to performance processes and events. Both are “scholarly”, employing registers of writing familiar to academia and possess an orderly apparatus of bibliography and endnotes (c.f. Halliday 1987:148, Bourdieu 1994, 1998:130-1). However, neither write “on” or “about” performance-making in modes characteristic to a spectating focused discipline of Performance Studies as surveyed earlier in this thesis. For example, Sofaer described the impetus to write an article ‘The crystal ball’ published in *Performance Research* (2004) as being ‘to share two of the predictions given to me’ (Sofaer 2004:119) during his experimental theatre piece at the ICA (2002) from which the article drew its name and in which audience members had their futures predicted onstage by a range of experts. At a level of structure, writing as prediction would seem a perfect companion to performance-making as a future-oriented process.

Sofaer described how he wished to explore ‘the relationship between performance and the written document[...with] a constant return to the status of the page: the diary page, the manuscript page, the doctor’s notebook, the books on the library shelf; and there is a focus on our encounter with the materiality of the page’ (Sofaer 2004:119). The present thesis is similarly preoccupied by relations of performance and writing (as documenting) and is marked too by a ‘constant return to the status of the page’ in notebooks of performance-makers and observers. In his

article, Sofaer reproduced pages from Derek Jarman's diaries even as Lee and I have included reproductions from her choreographic notebooks in several of our publications (and, for example, as Paul Rae did in the paper previously cited, Rae 2003).

Noting that the reproduction of the notebooks functions as documentation, what is marked by showing an artist's handwriting? An unplanned analogy to the "signed" particularity of Lee's dance-works? Is it also the case that Lee and I, working to develop a relationship of confidence and mutual trust on which to base a writing collaboration, intuitively focused on her notebooks? We therefore approached a writing of her creative practice through instances of writing that already existed in that practice. Without noting it deliberately, we may have been negotiating how she would contribute as co-author and affirming that the writing would be focused on her practice and not an academic imposition. In light of these reflections, it is significant that a publication like the Calouste Gulbenkian Artists' Diaries (Allen 2001) did not reproduce facsimiles of pages from the artist diaries it commissioned and printed. The omission may signal that those diaries were vehicles to record activities and reflections in the commissioned artists' professional lives but were not, as Lee's were, working notebooks made in the course of an artistic practice, that is to further a particular creative project.

Reflecting in this chapter on my collaboration with Lee, I have argued against identifying our writing as documentation, describing it instead in terms of epistemic practice. Reading Sofaer's article as a "research companion", I realise that although documentation is not our aim, our writing must operate in part as documentation for its knowledge claims to have currency. Putting her name to our writing as co-author, Lee becomes guarantor for the currency of our research claims. Pragmatically, our research cannot exist except as one response to her processes of dance-making so the very publication of the writing constitutes a limited documentation of her dance-making.

One thetic consequence of my take-up of Sofaer's writing as "research companion" is therefore my re-evaluation of how performance-making documentation is figured in my collaborative writing with choreographers. A concern for relations of writing to dance-making is the premise for my research; Sofaer's writing of that relation prompts me to acknowledge fully that the present thesis metadiscursively

writes one version of that relation, albeit part mediated as theorisation of the collaborative writing with performance-makers.

The reader may wish to access the following article reproduced on the Appendix CD-ROM (*In Proximity*) before reading the writing that I produced “alongside”: ‘Dis/interest: digging up our childhood’, a co-authored, photograph “illustrated” article by Sofaer and his sister Joanna Sofaer Derevenski (*Performance Research*, 7(10) 45-56 Routledge). This publication responded to research that they carried out in Cambridge and which led to a performance lecture and museum installation. In terms of authorship, they are identified as ‘Artist’ and ‘Archaeologist’ respectively. Foregrounded, then, are their contrasted disciplinary identities in a move that puts their relationship as siblings in a sense “under erasure”: it is implied by the shared “Sofaer” (and by the “our childhood” denoted in the title), but not yet directly acknowledged. I speculate that this ambivalence is not accidental: Sofaer and Derevenski’s paper seems to me to be characterised by an indeterminable distance between researchers and subjects: ‘The children of our study (ourselves) have changed out of all recognition. To all intents and purposes they no longer exist’ (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:46).

Their naming as “artist” and “archaeologist” raises questions for me as to their writing’s (cross-)disciplinary genre identity. They later clarify that while they have used archaeology as ‘a model’ (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:46) for enquiry into ‘their disparate concerns [...b]earing in mind the context of *Performance Research*, on this occasion the concerns revealed are those of visual culture and performance, rather than of archaeology’ (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:47).

The project title condenses concerns of the project and their paper: with ‘disinter’, there is play on notions of ‘excavation, the activity perhaps associated with archaeology above all other’ (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:47) and also on their enquiry into family photographs by how they cite the writings of Christian Metz and Roland Barthes on a linkage of photographic representation and death (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:49). As ‘disinterest’ it denotes a stance towards aesthetic experience (which is inevitably compromised by the complexity of Sofaer and Derevenski’s relations of distance and intimacy to their concerns in the project). The not-quite naming of ‘disinterest’ suggests a claim, therefore, albeit ironised, to a philosophical

register of enquiry. Alain Badiou indeed has recently written of *interest* in ways, which to my eye, intersect with Sofaer and Derevenski's writing:

We might play here upon the ambiguity of the word *interest*. Certainly, the devotee of mathematics, the theatre spectator on the edge of his seat [...] demonstrate a prodigious interest in what they are doing – [...] in the advent of that which they did not know themselves capable of. Nothing in the world could arouse the intensity of existence more [...] Nevertheless, as regards my interests as mortal and predatory animal, what is happening here does not concern me; no knowledge tells me that these circumstances have anything to do with me. I am altogether present there, linking my component elements via that *excess beyond myself* induced by the passing through me of a truth. But as a result, I am also suspended, broken, annulled; disinterested. [...] All my capacity for interest, which is my own perseverance in being, has *poured out* into the future consequences of the solution to this scientific problem [or theatre encounter...] (Badiou 2002:49-50)

Sofaer and Derevenski's writing stages a disinterested stance – formally recording their methodologies, research tools, questionnaire design, participants ('Jeffrey Sofaer the father') – but in a staging that is wryly overdetermined and hence unsustainable: the authority claims of disinterested ("neutral", "objective") description unravel. In one sense – that of the archaeological – Sofaer and Derevenski describe how they experience no self-interest in the photographs and toys of their childhood; they have no 'memory, real or imagined, of the period under investigation' (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:46) so they are 'using elements of the life histories of given people (who in a sense might as well be anyone, not necessarily us)' (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:46). (Nor do they textually theorise their interested engagement as researchers, committed, curious, invested in a research process, although photographs show them using their "research tools". Cf. Ulmer 1980, Knorr Cetina 2001:180.) In the sense of art practice, the photographs included with the paper signal that the writing's performance of disinterest is calculatedly ironic. The writing may "neutrally" report, for example, the existence of 'an old pair of glasses belonging to Jeffrey Sofaer (the father)' that became a research tool named 'The Father/Baby Optical Adjusters' (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:49). Yet, the headshot images of Sofaer and Derevenski wearing the glasses accentuates their sibling physiognomic similarity and works, I would argue, in art not archaeological terms: for example, a theme of a child/adult "dressing up" in a parent's clothes; a meta-visual comment on looking and looking back, their eyes magnified by the thick lens of the glasses.

Part of my “interest” in Sofaer and Derevenski’s research tools comes then from awareness of the humorous tension between the formal presentation and their idiosyncratic histories. On that basis, the research undertaking has an affective charge, redolent with the embarrassment of a now grown child whose parents show visiting peers a series (e.g. “your first bath”) of childhood photographs. The “disinterest” of Sofaer and Derevenski’s modes of writing then seems to perform ignorance about any loss of dignity for them of incorporating as research the intimate, mundane details of their past family life. (“Disinterest”, then, evokes the stance sociologist Pierre Bourdieu required in the 1990s of a researcher, contrasted with the self-blindness of a social agent to his *habitus*. Bourdieu indeed once entitled a chapter, ‘Is a disinterested act possible?’ (Bourdieu 1994, 1998).)

A concern with “disinterest” continues in the question of how the writing refers to Sofaer and Derevenski. The paper opens with a third person narrative, ‘Joshua Sofaer was born in [...]His elder sister Joanna was[...]’ (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:45). (This section is subtitled ‘Setting the scene’, perhaps partly alluding to the paper’s origin, as they write later, in a performance script). This narrative shifts into writing in a more conventionally thetic register characterised by abstract nouns, ‘Autobiography necessitates [...]’, and a universalising address, ‘As infancy precedes established long term memory, we can not access our own history’. This is succeeded by conventionally explanatory references to “we”, “our”, “us” in a project description. The paper is then divided into sections of commentary on what they term research tools. The subject markers shift again and include: performative, instructional registers (‘A suggested use [...] is to place it on the pillow beside you[...]’ Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:48); a more familiar naming (‘This led Joanna to think about[...]’); and a marking of their differentiated viewpoints as authors (‘my/Joshua’s conception’ Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:48). This latter mode seems to me to suggest an acknowledgment of and resistance to the ways, as subjects of their research (even if in a limited sense, noting their argument that it ‘might as well be anyone, not necessarily us’), “they” are “othered” by representation within discourses of Performance Studies.

I proposed adopting Sofaer and Derevenski’s paper as “research companion” to my research for a number of reasons. I sought, for example, guidance for writing with contrasted disciplinary perspectives (between choreography and Dance Studies writing in the case of my project). I was curious in particular about how their research might perform an ‘archaeological turn’ that could inform my own rhetorical borrowing of

ethnographic modes, while noting that their research indeed has a different credibility given Derevenski's "Human Sciences" training and expertise as archaeologist.

It seems to me that Sofaer and Derevenski's paper writes a relation to performance and performance-making that is "beside" or "in proximity", rather than with the ontologising force of "on" and "about" that the present thesis seeks to resist with respect to writing relations to choreography. My argument is that the writing is exemplary to my project on the basis of the fact that, as collaborative writing by a performance-maker, it plays inventively with academic conventions, as did Goulish's writing examined previously, and it draws upon philosophical writing to develop and illuminate a theoretical inquiry that Sofaer relates to his performance practice.

Sofaer and Derevenski's paper may be more effective as "research companion" to the projects of the present research than was Goulish's writing in the use it makes of photographs and in the more restricted but direct relation between their article and an instance of performance-making. This relation is unusual in itself since it is not responses to performance or performance-making that have been worked into a journal article, but the actual performance script. (Could, for example, the words that Lee developed with the dancers and myself to say during performances of *The suchness of Eddie and Heni* (2002, reworked 2005-6) become the basis for published writing "in proximity" to that dance work?)

I was drawn furthermore to how Sofaer and Derevenski approached writing in scholarly registers (humorously or otherwise), of matters personal to them, for example by their serious play of bringing the apparatus of archaeology to bear on recent family history. A dilemma of the collaboration between Lee and myself has concerned the extent to which our writing remains close to Lee's individual concerns as choreographer at the possible expense of a wider significance to readers.

Several of Sofaer and Derevenski's statements are consonant with arguments made elsewhere in this thesis, for example of practitioner understanding of inventive practices as epistemic and ongoing (Knorr Cetina 2001:182): 'exploring the potential meanings beyond the end results of a singular research process [...]gave rise to an exponential expansion of the text' (Sofaer and Derevenski 2002:46-47). Their writing is attentive to the unfolding of their research process, an attentiveness that I could aim at; they note, for example, that 'This led Joshua to think about [...]'. However, this

latter observation appears to me to be ambivalent in synoptic terms, since complex causal factors have been reduced to a ‘this’ which simply ‘led’ to a consequence.

I conclude my responses at this point by turning to focus on the extended note that Sofaer wrote to the description of ‘The Fort/Da Mother Doll’ research tool, commenting on Freud’s famous account of his grandson’s play in ‘Beyond the pleasure principle’ (1920) and Derrida’s inquiry into Freud’s account in his article ‘To Speculate – on Freud’(1987). Derrida’s analysis informed my attention in the present research context to its speculative knowledge relation and to the motivated, active and shifting positions of an observer. I was drawn then to consider how Sofaer’s practitioner-centred writing cited Derrida’s writing. Sofaer wrote:

The motivation of this writing [...]is in unpacking the structural inter-relation between the canonical text (psychoanalytic theory), the biographical account (the/my father’s anecdote) and arts practice (the making and staging of The Fort/Da Mother Doll) (Sofaer &Derevenski 2002:55)

In Sofaer’s description of his motivation, I find what I propose might be taken as an exemplary articulation of a relation between writing and performance practice, a relation that is to which the present research project might aim.

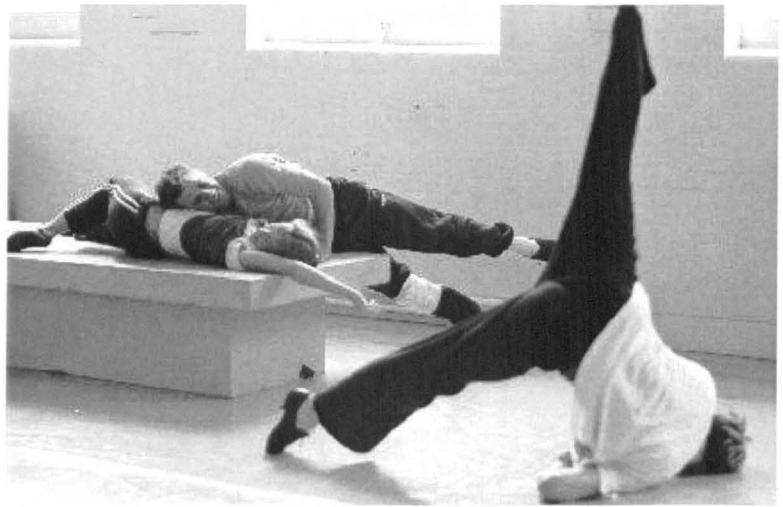


Fig.10 Rehearsal photographs by John Robinson of Kim Brandstrup in rehearsal with Arc Dance

On 'Not (Yet) Knowing': Writing and an Ethics of Practice

'It is only a hunch I say,' I say, and she replies:

'Only?' (Lomax 2004:3)

[Rosemary Butcher's] enquiry, and her speculation, continues, long after the show has emerged, and after it has been seen by an audience. Hence her own 'knowledge-status', as performance-maker, with regard to 'the work', remains tentative, hesitant, questioning, bemused – even anxious (Melrose, introduction to Butcher et al 2005:67)

Processes of writing collaboration with Kim Brandstrup (on Appendix CD-ROM)

In 2004, I began a project of collaborative writing with choreographer Kim Brandstrup of Arc Dance. Kim Brandstrup studied film at the University of Copenhagen and choreography under Nina Fonaroff at the London Contemporary Dance School before establishing Arc Dance Company in 1985. He has created over twenty works for the Arc Dance Company, including *Saints and Shadows* (Olivier Award nominee), *Antic*, *Crime Fictions*, *Peer Gynt*, *Elegy*, *Brothers*, *Hamlet*, *Otello* (Evening Standard Award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Dance, 1993) and most recently *Hans Christian Andersen – the Anatomy of a Storyteller* (2004). His freelance credits include productions for London Contemporary Dance Theatre, including *Orfeo* (1989 Laurence Olivier Award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Dance), Geneva Ballet, ENB, Royal Danish Ballet, Rambert Dance Company, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal and *Afsked* for Johan Kobborg. Future commissions will include new works for the Royal Swedish Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet and an evening of opera and dance to Debussy at the Bregenz Festival 2006.

The project I undertook with Brandstrup was unlike my previous collaborations with choreographers in that I did not observe Brandstrup in rehearsal. Instead we worked together through face-to-face conversations and by email on writing exploring his worded self-understanding of how he works. The starting point for our writing was

a task he had used as a tool for working with dancers but which he was using in research workshops, thus implicitly working with it as a metapractical analytic tool.

The writing we produced together is entitled ‘The instant before choice: a choreographer’s practical speculations on time and perception’ (forthcoming 2006/7). I cite below from the paper to comment on the aims and focus of our writing. From the perspective of dancers and choreographers, Brandstrup sought in the paper to reflect how particular skills and sensibilities ‘give us an unusual awareness of the split-second consequences that perception of one passing moment has on the next’ (Brandstrup and Pollard, 2006/7 forthcoming). Brandstrup was keen then to write of his creative practice in ways that moved beyond reflection on the making of particular choreographic productions (which may frequently be the expected focus of a performance maker’s writing). Brandstrup and I conjectured that his ‘long pragmatic experience of making successful performances for live audiences’ might participate in an enquiry that other disciplinary fields would identify ‘as enquiry into human perception and attention span’ (Brandstrup and Pollard, op cit). In support of this position, we cited the words of neurologist Semir Zeki:

I hold the somewhat unusual view that artists are in some sense neurologists, studying the brain with techniques that are unique to them, but studying unknowingly the brain and its organisation nevertheless. (Zeki, S. 1999:10, *Inner vision: an exploration of art and the brain*. Oxford, Oxford University Press)

We proposed that Brandstrup’s creative practice, ‘focused on the exigencies of making particular pieces to deadlines, can also be seen as an enquiry that extends beyond those performances to which I put my name as choreographer’. Brandstrup described further how:

I wanted to explore how choreographic actions are always made in reaction to the sense a choreographer has of a preceding moment’s continuing resonance. The resonance of that moment must in part be governed by physiological rules of perception, and it was these that I sensed we were drawing on, far more than aesthetic rules of composition that might be expected in a choreographic workshop, but which, made by one generation are broken by the next [...] In the terms of my colleague Susan Melrose, I could say that this paper is concerned with how aspects of my dance-making might theorise human experience of the recent past (but a theorising through action rather than academic registers of writing). (Brandstrup and Pollard, forthcoming)

Our paper focused on a task of mirroring that Brandstrup uses both choreographically and in research workshops and which he judges can reveal aspects of the process by which an audience gives attention to a dance performance and of how a choreographer can inflect that attention. Brandstrup described his understanding ‘that this mirroring task points to how, immediately after you watch a phrase of movement come to a close, there may be a few moments when an echo of that movement is briefly still available in a viewer’s brain [...] A dancer’s analytic skill in mirroring movement, I am realising, can break open the choices and events of choreography that appear instantaneous but which are the effect of a precise temporal sequence of one moment resonating into the next’ (Brandstrup and Pollard, forthcoming). Brandstrup was particularly interested in ideas of rhythm and the metaphors of *echo* and *resonance* that he found he was using when he reflected on how he perceived movement since they ‘belong to the realm of the ear, though we are dealing with dance, a visual medium’ (Brandstrup and Pollard, op cit).

In an afternote to the paper, we both recognized epistemological and ethical difficulties of *writing* research of choreographic practice. For example our citation of seemingly disengaged scientific research ‘may inadvertently have distanced us from the concerns that prompted the writing, and which only arose for Brandstrup through artistic engagement’. We noted too that the formal registers of our writing ‘might displace what should be the primary authority of Brandstrup’s inventive professional artistic practice’ but that we had included photographic stills and excerpts from conversation to ‘indicate the mixed-mode, oral economies in which Brandstrup operates as professional artist and on which this research writing is premised’ (Brandstrup and Pollard, forthcoming with reference Melrose 2002b, and her take-up of Ong 1982). The reader might at this juncture wish to access the full draft text of the paper on the Appendix CD-ROM (*On ‘Not (Yet) Knowing’*) and the studio photographs of Brandstrup rehearsing with dancers of Arc Dance.

An objective of the present chapter is to evaluate the writing with Brandstrup against objectives particular to my research. In light of my ethical responsibility to Brandstrup as collaborator, I invited him to read both this chapter and my reflective journal, requesting his permission to represent our collaboration as here and to cite comments he had made to me. As I noted in *In Proximity*, to reproduce co-authored writing and comment on it within the isolated and contrastive frame of a doctoral

thesis remains ethically ambiguous: I focus my thetic reflections on my role and perspective within our processes of co-authored writing, however, I am equally of necessity addressing material of intense significance to Brandstrup.

When I forwarded a draft of this chapter to Brandstrup, he described misgivings he felt, that my framing of our collaboration to my doctoral enquiry detracted from the value and engagement of the research that we had produced together. That is, our work stood as a case study to my doctoral research, thereby detracting from its epistemic significance as itself a piece of research. Brandstrup described to me too his uneasiness at feeling the subject/object of seemingly detached observations in writing. I am reminded of the comment that Lee made to me ‘that I become analysed and looked at and I remain silent’ (email to Pollard, July 2006, cited *In Proximity*). Brandstrup pointed out to me that in the draft as it then stood, I had not referenced his own enquiry as choreographer into how we perceive movement as structured rhythmically, and into how we can be *moved* (both kinaesthetically and affectively) by watching dancers move. His enquiry was the basis and drive of the writing we produced together, yet my thetic register had problematically passed over these concerns to focus on and thematise an aspect of our relationship as collaborators.

I have redrafted the chapter subsequently but acknowledge here both his reservations and the persistent ethical difficulties of scholarly enquiry into the knowledge practices of choreographers. Discussing together our responses to the present chapter, I realized a significant difference between the process of my research with Brandstrup and that of my research with Lee. Unlike with Brandstrup, Lee and I had co-authored papers which reflected on the process of our research collaboration and approach to writing as researcher and choreographer (Lee and Pollard 2004 & 2006) and an unspoken relationship based on trust and mutual respect came into being, turning around Lee’s work as our shared focus. When therefore I came to write of our collaboration within objectives specific to my doctoral enquiry, I could draw upon reflections that we had already made together. Ethically, then, comments I have made in the present research on my work with Lee may be less disjointed from that collaboration than those I have made on my work with Brandstrup. In the latter relationship, a degree of slippage could be identified, as far as our partly different, partly shared focus was concerned.

Throughout the project of writing with Brandstrup, I kept an informal journal in which I attempted to observe reflexively my participation in our ongoing collaboration, informed by my reading as “research companion” of a collaborative journal kept by the performance group Goat Island. In the extracts from the journal reproduced below, I observe dilemmas that arose for me during the project, certain of which have been marked and theorized elsewhere in this thesis. I wish to emphasise that these extracts give only one strand of my experience of collaboration with Brandstrup which was equally an absorbing, challenging and productive project that resulted in a paper for anticipated publication in a peer-reviewed journal, *ePAI* in 2006/7. For the purposes of the present thesis, however, I have focused on difficulties I experienced which permit reflection for me on my practices of writing, in different registers, with choreographers.

January 2005

In the course of this project, I am forcefully realising how necessary it is for my thesis to evidence something of each choreographer's practice and my interest in it. I had not before recognised the extent to which how I write with a choreographer is bound up with the enthusiasm I have for his or her dance-making. It seems that this enthusiasm is productive, stimulating me to find many possible connections and avenues for writing. In this project with Brandstrup I must rely on his words but I am unable, I feel, to grasp thoroughly his recurring interest in notions of “closure”, a movement “unit” or “resonance”. When I question him further, rather than describe a remembered situation from the studio, he tends to sketch out an example, marking a pattern rhythmically by voice or gesture. In the instant of his doing, I think I begin to grasp what he is saying, but cannot retain it such that I can reproduce or work with it as writing.

[...] I feel that practice-focused examples from his creative experience would give the writing that Brandstrup and I are producing more conviction, but I do not know how to draw these from him. Repeatedly he refers to “poetic metaphor” and to how an audience will agree when “something works” but does not elaborate verbally such that I can extend our writing of them. I feel that I am failing to grasp how these ideas continue to intrigue him in terms of his practitioner theoretics no doubt because I have little sense of how they are productive for him in the studio.

July 2005

Aside from minor alterations to the text, the key change we make is to write a closing section. This section grounds the scientific registers of the previous section against Kim's choreographic concerns and draws the article to a close. My anxiety continues that we may be working with somewhat general observations of the workshops that have already been covered in the published reports. The cognitive science literature, cannot account for example as to why he prefers a metaphor of “resonance” over a scientific description of how, in the short-term, a movement seen is perceptually retained (I can only speculate that the metaphor is for Kim differently productive in creative terms).

These extracts are chosen to highlight elements of our collaboration that I interpreted as marking misunderstanding or a potential in our material that remained under

developed. The extracts are necessarily selective: the full text of my journal (which the reader might at this point wish to access on the Appendix CD-ROM, *On 'Not (Yet) Knowing'*) differently records my reflections on our ongoing collaboration. The observations gathered by the selection do not also necessarily coincide with how I might now, over a year later, re-interpret my experience of our collaboration. (Nor need my experience coincide with that of Brandstrup.)

What appears indicated by the misunderstandings I observe is that Brandstrup and I were still failing to *write* a practitioner *theoretics* (Melrose 2002c). I note the ethical difficulty in that the present research aspires to writing that can engage with a choreographer's knowledge perspective, but that necessarily I can only undertake such an attempt collaboratively with a professional choreographer. Brandstrup and I seemed not, for example, to have succeeded in wording what it is that he takes from the scientific literature into his dance-making and choreographic research processes. Our – or my - failing is exemplary, as the present chapter will discuss; the writing may be successful in Brandstrup's terms, reflecting and continuing his choreographic research. Our writing seems to me an instance of how, as Melrose argued, scholarly writing to date is unable to articulate how choreographers 'theorise through complex action, *how* they theorise a mixed-mode actional engagement without necessary recourse to explanatory text-production' (Melrose 2002d). Melrose has also observed, on this subject, that *new choreographic work* might itself be the outcome or realisation of Brandstrup's enquiry drawing on scientific literature.

My difficulties in the project might be summarized as centering on what I perceived as *reticence* on Brandstrup's part, a reticence I have perceived in other comments by dance-makers. Rosemary Lee, for example, told me in conversation, 'I am a choreographer, not a writer and in the past I have steered away from talking about my practice, let alone writing about it' (Lee & Pollard 2004). More emphatically, the charismatic and virtuoso ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov is reported as having said in interview in the mid-1990s: 'I don't like talking about my work. Either you've seen me dance or you haven't. You either liked it or you didn't. I don't believe that people would like to know why and how I dance a piece' (Morris 1996:29). The present research is written in the conviction that Baryshnikov is mistaken in the case at least of some people; that to have seen him dance does not make redundant any enquiry into how as practitioner he approaches his art. Questions,

in the case of a specifically *practitioner* enquiry, put by other practitioners, would be answered as a practitioner answers - perhaps in part by demonstration, and cryptically. Tellingly, Baryshnikov's comment, which I am interpreting as a practitioner's reticence, was cited disparagingly by dance writer Marcia Siegel to illustrate the following argument:

[D]ance has an intellectual life as well as a temporal life. Choreographers go to great lengths to conceal this aspect of creativity, as if any suspicion of it would spoil the viewer's experience or somehow render the dance invalid. The reasons why they do this are another great unexplored dance mystery. (Siegel 1996:30)

In the above quotation, Siegel seemed to dismiss what she identified as the reticence of dance-makers to discuss the 'intellectual life' of their work but she does not in fact define what 'intellectual life' might constitute, for an expert practitioner. She explained their verbal reticence by the theory that practitioners misjudge viewers' experience: 'as if [...] it would spoil the viewer's experience or somehow render the dance invalid'. An objective of this chapter is to begin to theorise the reticence of some choreographers in talking of their creative processes as based not in their anticipation of how it will effect spectating but in their knowledge relation to their dance work in the making.

Some performance scholars have defended rather than dismissed artist reticence; ResCen, for example, lists amongst its research objectives that:

It is important to acknowledge that some artists refuse to define their own practices, resisting definition by others, because the processes constitute one aspect of the their [sic.] hard-won intellectual property. Reflection by others needs not to be undertaken as a further means to analyse the art-product. It can be undertaken from within the real-time and space of the making-process itself. (www.rescen.net accessed 29/4/06)

ResCen's defence appears initially to be more practice-focused than that of Siegel, correlating an artist's refusal 'to define their own practices' with 'resisting definition by others'. Logically, this would appear to culminate in a strategy of absolute reticence in order to protect artistic intellectual property - which might not, indeed, be easily verbalised. However the next statement is to me unclear, seeming to fall back indeed, to the knowledge perspectives of an expert spectator. As I read it, their argument (which is beyond the scope of the present thesis to consider) is that 'reflection by others' on an artist's process is unnecessary 'as a further means' to contribute to a

spectator's understanding of a performance. The closing statement however seems to imply that 'reflection [on practice] as a further means to analyse the art-product' (that is to serve spectator understandings of product reflection) may instead be undertaken by practitioners 'within the real-time and space of the making-process itself'.

The possible impact of a performance practitioner's reflections on creative process to a spectator's experience of a performance product will not be examined within the scheme of the present research. I am supposing instead for the purposes of the present enquiry into performance-making that when a performance practitioner reflects on his or her process, the activity is epistemic, contributing to his or her constantly changing understanding of an ongoing creative project, and increasing, thereby, her own expertise which she may well not need at any point, in professional terms, to verbalise (Melrose 2005c, Knorr Cetina 2001:182). The question for the present research then becomes the extent to which those reflections may be verbally formulated and made available to scholars through dialogue or writing.

Reflective practice and performance-makers' "reticence"

In seeking to theorise a creative practitioner's reticence, I propose to consider the research of Donald Schön, particularly from the early 1980s who foregrounded the activity of reflection as central to 'an understanding of what professionals do' (Smith 2001). His work is important to the overall framing of the present research by his attention to the working processes of professional practitioners, including artists. For example, Schön wrote in general terms of the professional expertise that a practitioner might draw upon when responding to an unfamiliar situation:

How can an inquirer use what he already knows in a situation which he takes to be unique?[...] The practitioner has built up a *repertoire* of examples, images, understandings, and actions [that...]includes the whole of his experience insofar as it is accessible to him for understanding and action[...]he sees [a new situation] as something already present in his repertoire[...] The familiar situation functions as a precedent, or a metaphor, or – in Thomas Kuhn's phrase - an exemplar for the unfamiliar one. (Schön 1983:137-8)

In writing such as this, Schön's approach might productively be brought to the present research. Lee and I might, for example, have cited his theory of a practitioner's past experience as repertoire in our paper 'Forms of anticipation: a choreographer's

notebook' (forthcoming 2006). Lee's description of how she reflected on her process in dialogue with me could also be cited in support of the benefits of reflective practice to artists: 'I realised how many things are given to me – *are* a given – that I would need to unravel for Niki. But in unravelling them it makes it clearer to me what I am actually doing' (Lee speaking, Lee and Pollard 2004). Echoing the description used by one professed reflective researcher (in the field of education), I might also have described the overall aims of my enquiry as 'to develop styles of writing capable of engaging the interest/empathy' of practitioners and that 'feel more closely akin to practitioners' existing ways of thinking and learning' (Potter 2001:161).

Approaches to reflective practice draw on Michael Polanyi's description from the 1960s of the 'informed guesses, hunches, and imaginings' (Smith 2003) in inventive activity, which dance-making might be understood as, that Polanyi characterized as *tacit* knowledge: '*we can know more than we can tell*' (Polanyi 1967:4). Schön, correspondingly, wrote:

I begin with the assumption that competent practitioners usually know more than they can say. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit.' (Schön 1983: viii)

It might be observed that such knowledge is tacit only with respect to a metacognitive expectation that knowledge can be articulated propositionally. The knowledge-perspective is once more that of a spectator ; the "competent practitioners" concerned may as collaborators be able to "say" (or communicate multi-modally) very precisely to each other what they know in so far as they will use shared knowledge in continuing a creative process. It appears disingenuous then to describe such knowledge as "tacit" unless it is argued, as Bourdieu did of *habitus*, that an agent may well be ignorant (as far as access to the metadiscourse is concerned) as to what motivates her or his actions:

An agent who possesses a practical mastery, an art, whatever it may be, is capable of applying in his action the disposition which appears to him only in action, in the relationship with a situation[...] And there is every reason to think that as soon as he reflects on his practice, adopting a quasi-theoretical posture, the agent loses any chance of expressing the truth of his practice, and especially the truth of the practical relation to the practice. (Bourdieu 1990: 90-1)

Bourdieu's sociological argument would appear, as far as the period of writing was concerned, to undermine the possibility of formulating any methodology of reflective practice. His work was not specifically concerned with professional expertise, since his

orientation was to class difference and related differences in access to symbolic capital. Schön's models of immediate 'reflection-in-action' and later 'reflection-on-action', by way of contrast, were widely taken up through the 1990s and post-2000 in higher education professional training programs, particularly within the fields of education, health and social studies as methodologies of reflective practice and the related methodologies of Action Research. An example from the performing arts is the project initiated by De Montfort University's Performing Arts department in 2000 to 'examine and promote ways in which students of dance drama/theatre and performance may learn more effectively from their practical experience by engaging with it in a reflective way' (De Montfort University 2000-2). De Montfort did not, however, in the publication from which this statement was drawn, qualify their use of 'learn more effectively'. Other accounts of formally undertaken reflective practice in art-making suggest that the art made may substantially shift during such processes. For example, assessing his experience of reflecting formally on his creative practice visual artist within a course of doctoral study, Peter Chapman, suggested that:

the value to the practitioner of working in a way that engages with "theory" through reflection on action and practice is twofold. The work is more critically informed and the understanding of individual process leads to a different sort of self-interrogation, thus the work, the artefact, reflects this. (Scrivener and Chapman 2004)

Notwithstanding the productive take-up of reflective practice in dance and performance research and professional training, I would argue that Schön's approaches may not effectively enable practitioner-focused understandings of dance-making, that "reflective practice" might seem to offer. Schön's 1983 introduction to *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action* evidences once again a troubled (and troubling) relation between scholars and (arts) practitioners. He wrote that:

Complaints about the elitism or obscurantism of the universities tend to be associated with a mystique of practical competence. When people use terms such as "art" and "intuition", they usually intend to terminate discussion rather than to open up inquiry. It is as though the practitioner says to his academic colleague, "While I do not accept *your* view of knowledge, I cannot describe my own." Sometimes, indeed, the practitioner appears to say, "My kind of knowledge is indescribable," or even, "I will not attempt to describe it lest I paralyze myself. (Schön 1983:viii)

Schön's representation of an "unreflective" professional practitioner seems surprisingly harsh: "the practitioner" is one who would 'terminate discussion' and

reject the opinions of others on principle; by contrast, the normative values of scholarly practices concern ‘open[ing] up inquiry’ and welcoming debate. Furthermore, “the practitioner” is represented as claiming a transcendent or occult status to their knowledge as ‘indescribable’ that will prevent it from circulating in a scriptural economy (obscuring that it is available for reflection to the extent that it is manifest in performance productions). The dogmatic refusal, ‘I will not attempt’ and the hyperbolic, archaically phrased justification ‘lest I paralyze myself’ evoke a figure of the practitioner that gestures towards the willful, neurotic and histrionic in contrast with the apparently clearly articulated and well-intentioned objectives of pedagogic practices and their formulation.

The model of reflective practice would seem then not to allow for a conceptualization of artists’ continuing expressions of reticence, two decades after Schön’s approaches began to be taken up in schemes of professional development. Nonetheless, artists continue to be reticent, including those who have access to tools and modes of reflective practice, suggesting perhaps that the major practice modes to which they have professional and expert access are other than writerly or writing-like. Lee, for instance, has written of her ‘wariness’ about reflecting in ResCen or with me on her practice, with ‘the worry that my being more aware of how I work could get in the way of things flowing in the studio’ (Lee and Pollard 2004). She implicitly asserts that her creative expertise is held somewhere other than in the linguistic or language-making brain centres, and that to activate linguistic or language-making sites might mean that what is thereby produced and valued might either overtake or block creative operations.

A proponent of reflective practice might cite in response Schön’s argument that ‘practitioners do frequently think about what they are doing while doing it [contrary to the] widespread belief that thinking must interfere with doing’ (Schön 1983:275). Schön in this remark generalizes “thinking” - effectively as a “non-doing”, or as “non-practised” - and is problematic in so doing. Lee however was remarking upon a specific mode of thinking at a meta-level of awareness of how she was working - which, in operating on a meta-plane, tends to take one *out of* the time and of the space of the primary doing or making processes. Chapman, cited previously, described that [‘w]hilst this process of interrogating previous work work’ - this is thematisation, in Knorr Cetina (2001) - ‘was useful in understanding what I had done and why, it

seemed strange, not something I'd done as consciously before' (Scrivener and Chapman 2004). Quickly he realised that 'I had stopped making meaningful work[...]it seemed that the alienating method of working was stifling my creativity.' His supervisor, Stephen Scrivener, commented that Chapman's 'experience is shared by many of our practice based students' which suggests that Schön may have been over-hasty in dismissing the belief that thinking interferes with doing, at least insofar as artists are concerned.

Lee has written indeed that 'I was trained to be a "thinking dancer", but at present I feel I have to try to hide from my thoughts, try to outwit them, to get away. It is almost as if I have to run from my self, (or is it my intellect) in order to find a place of unknowing again, a place of waiting' (Lee in ResCen, forthcoming). Elsewhere she described what I might want to identify, after Rae, as an 'inherently reflexive' practice:

There is a visceral sense of the rightness of the moment that I try to stop my emotions clouding. To sense it one needs an element of distance coupled with acute attentiveness. (Lee, ResCen forthcoming)

Given these reservations it is perhaps surprising that, as De Montfort University reported, 'although reflective practice plays an increasingly significant role in the development of many professional practitioners there is surprisingly little evidence of the use of the term, in a formal or a theorised sense, in performing arts. Nevertheless much of what is undertaken in dance and drama education is akin to reflective practice' (De Montfort University 2000-2). What may be unattractive, to the performing arts practitioner, is the apparent affective dis-investment, and register shift (to the third person) that a technical thematisation seems to call for.

Choreographer, dancer and dance scholar Carol Brown has observed that the 'movement in contemporary dance in the 90s towards what has variously been called, the 'thinking body', or the 'reflective practitioner', has been largely inspired by the influence of somatic practices and techniques on the training and development of dance artists'. What might also be noted, in passing, is the impact of phenomenology on accounts of first person activities. Brown argued however that:

whilst a somatically informed dancer might engage in a reflective act of body/self awareness, this does not necessarily open the practice, as a technology of the self, to critique from outside its own borders. This, I believe is largely because whilst the materiality of the body is rethought through experiential anatomy, contesting its historical inscriptions as an object of

science, its installation within the world is inhibited by existing frameworks for both learning and perceiving dance. This is largely to do with the practice of space within dance and its studio-based culture that teleologically points an arrow towards the perspectival space of the theatre as its paradigmatic mode and endpoint. (Brown 2003:18)

Performance scholar and director Paul Rae has additionally observed that a practitioner's commitment to reflective work may not be sufficient to produce an account faithful to his or her "knowing-in-action". He described how during one project he wrote daily emails to his costume designer to prompt him to word his understanding of this rehearsal process. Without noting it at the time, he only kept up this correspondence for part of the rehearsal period. He later observed:

[T]he emails were useful only for as long as they contributed to the overall development of the work. Contrary to my best intentions, therefore, there never *was* any critical reflexivity separate from the artistic practice – nothing that exceeded the necessary procedures of theatre directing. Indeed, reflexive practice in the arts is a red herring, not because it doesn't exist, but because all practice is inherently reflexive – as much as it needs to be and no more. (Rae 2003)

Rae's observation problematises aspirations to practitioner reflection within, in ResCen's phrase, 'the real-time and space of the making process'. Are reflections to be understood as already part of a creative *epistemic* practice (within which Rae's argument seems to fall) in which, reflectively, a 'researcher experience[s] herself as a conscious subject that relates to epistemic objects' (Knorr Cetina 2001:180)? In the former case, where reflection is conceived of as secondary to the creative process, then a practitioner's reticence is merely an accident of personal disposition. If, on the other hand, reflection is a feature of creative practice, then it will be possible, as argued here following Melrose (unpublished conversation, winter 2005), to theorise reticence as a response sensitive to the times of a practitioner's knowledge of their process. Reticence may thus be considered as both a logical response and a difficulty constitutive to a project, as here, that aims at practitioner-focused writing of performance-making.

'I probably won't know [...] until we perform it'

I am suggesting therefore that an artist's reticence in the face of scholarly inquiry into her or his creative practice has been insufficiently theorized with respect to the different times at which a performance-maker might "know" (or speculate) on an

ongoing creative process. The scholarly omission may be understood however in the light of the difference I have noted between reflection as/within creative practice and reflection that is in addition to that practice. Remembering the relay cited previously between experience and interpretation (Kwon 2000:75), a practitioner who adopts a methodology of “reflective practice” can be understood to speak from an interpretative - somewhat disengaged - position that frames their creative practice in terms of a practice as research paradigm. By contrast, a practitioner whose wording relates to an ‘inherently reflexive’ practice, as argued by Rae, might be understood as producing an experiential, engaged and possibly interrogative account whose broader significance can only thereafter be revealed by interpretation. The account given by artists, that is, may be conceived of in academic writing (explicitly or not) as anecdotal – that is, first and second person in register, and connected as a narrative to a given there and then – and hence inadequate in terms of criteria for formal writing, and requiring therefore, a scholarly intervention. More damningly, Bourdieu, writing in the early 1990s, was critical of the notion that a practitioner might articulate any knowledge of his or her practice: ‘[P]ractice does not imply – or rather excludes – mastery of the logic that is expressed within it. Bourdieu 1990:11) Melrose has argued, on the other hand, that the specificity of collaborative performance-making is such that the performance-makers always engage lucidly, at particular stages, with the logics of production that apply to the performance event (Melrose, unpublished discussion 2006).

It may be possible, then, to renegotiate the experience/interpretation relay, and so effect a re-evaluation of creative practitioners’ accounts, through attention to instances of a *constitutive* artist’s reticence. For example, the following is extracted from an interview by Daniela Perazzo with choreographer Jonathan Burrows:

- DP What do you mean by ‘concentrating on images’?
 JB I’m not entirely sure and I probably won’t know what that means until we perform it. (Perazzo 2005:4)

Perazzo’s question seemed, I would judge, to assume (based on everyday speech practices) that Burrows would be able to clarify or explain referentially a phrase he had used earlier in their interview. In this interview fragment, Perazzo evidenced a scholarly concern for orders of meaning and interpretation (as did Kaye in the interview with LeCompte, *In Proximity*). However, Burrows’ response was reticent; he deflected her question as if regretting his earlier wording. (As we have seen, above, this similarly happened in my writing undertaking with Brandstrup.)

Walter Ong suggested in the early 1980s that ‘chirographic cultures regard speech as more specifically informational than do oral cultures where speech is more performance-oriented, more a way of doing something to someone’ (Ong 1982:177). If Burrows’ rehearsal process is regarded as a culture of “secondary orality” (Ong 1982:3) then it might have been more productive to consider how his reference to “image” might stand in conceptually for a provisional, speculative schema of “something” that was occurring for Burrows relationally and multi-modally in rehearsal or in reflection. This as yet undetermined “something” seemed to enter the scriptural economy by being termed “image”, whereas Burrows’ reticence signals that care is required. The “image” is not yet conceptually stabilized, as far as the two interlocuteurs are concerned, and referential fields may well differ (although a partial stabilization may be the reflective effect of having worded it). A particular care then will be called for in a project, such as the present one, that seeks to produce as writing observations of dance-making.

If Burrows would or could not be more definite as to his meaning when he spoke of ‘concentrating on images’, he did offer to speculate on *when* he would know:

I feel in a terrible disadvantage doing this interview right now because in these last two weeks of finishing the performance – and in this very moment we are trying to find the ending – almost every day I’m looking at it I see it completely differently. Some days I think I’ve caught a glimpse of what the audience would see and other days I think again I’ve caught a glimpse, but it’s completely different. And some days, of course, I worry that the audience won’t see anything at all. I feel I’m somewhere between uncertainty and certainty and I have to bide my time. And it takes infinite patience to endure the last moments of arriving at a finished performance. (Burrows in interview with Perazzo 2005:4-5)

Burrows was explaining his reticence with respect to a present, constantly changing and future-focused knowledge of the dance in process – to which one might want to add what Massumi called the aspiration, in the artist, to “qualitative transformation” – that the new work might “work better” than the last one (Massumi 1996). His *not (yet) knowing*, that is, demanded circumspection and reticence. The reticence that frustrates scholars then might better be reconsidered as a rational and legitimate response to the difficulty for a creative practitioner of making her or his account of practice in the dominant scriptural registers in which academic writers are trained.

A major objective of this chapter then is to argue that a dance-maker’s resistance to wording her or his practice for (or as) a researcher (even when, as with

the project with Brandstrup, the goal of producing practice-focused writing has been agreed in advance), should not be dismissed on psychological grounds as individual reticence (although such reticence could compound the difficulties, as indicated in *In Proximity* with the discussion of a ‘failed rapport’ between artist and researcher). Brandstrup, for example, wrote in our paper that ‘at the outset I say that I identify myself as a choreographer and not a writer, it may be understood that I contribute to this co-authored paper in some trepidation’. If reticence is dismissed, it is according to a spectator understanding of product that fails to conceptualise a not (yet) knowing of creative process. To enquire into reticence, though, permits me to begin to mark out a writing practice in relation to the modes of knowing of a dance-maker at work. Close attention to Burrow’s hesitancy, for example, has pointed to there being differing times of a practitioner’s (verbalisable) knowledge – to which I want to add, however, that his practice-knowledges are ongoing, complex, and internally differentiated. Burrows could not but hesitate therefore in the face of Perazzo’s question; he had no place or time of verbalized certainty from which to respond to her atemporal question.

These differing times and the consequently potentially shifting patterns of knowledge may be foregrounded when a choreographer describes her or his process at intervals during a project. For example, I recorded conversations with Rosemary Butcher across two years asking her about a performance work she was in the process of making. At different times she speculated that ‘what I think I have done too is to combine material from one idea and put it into another [...] I may have to start again with different material [...] I probably need to leave the runway idea[...] What I am beginning to think more and more is that [...] I must magnify what is happening’ (Butcher et al 2005:77). A few months later, her words marked a shift in her sense of the emerging piece: ‘I think I can see now that the work is as much to do with people on the ground [...] I had not intended to deal in this work with the human content that comes when partner-work is used’ (Butcher et al 2005:78).

Contrary to the account adopted in the present research of a practitioner’s knowledge relation to her creative practice as unfolding and provisional (following Knorr Cetina 2001:183 and Melrose 2005c), Edgar Allen Poe’s fiction ‘The Oval Portrait’ recounts a moment of devastating certainty in an artist’s knowledge. (Gregory Ulmer, too, has written of this hyperbolic certainty, in his *Heuretics: the Logic of Invention* 1989.) Hélène Cixous commented in the early 1990s of the tale: ‘as the painter looks at the painting, *he sees* for the first time. He has never seen before[...]

It's only at the end, when "the thing" is finished [...] that he takes a moment to regard. And in that moment he sees for the first time' (Cixous 1993:31). Poe's tale is the limit case of an artwork that is complete; his bride dies with the last brushstroke, her life fixed in her portrait. My conviction however is that this tale is actually paradigmatic of a spectator's perception of an artwork rather than of an artist, for all that it appears to describe the artist's perspective. A choreographer may perceive how a performance 'figures as a single unfolding, which never quite realises the philosophical enquiry which moves it' (Melrose, in Butcher et al 2005:67). Instead, the work, for the artist, tends to involve final moments of contingency and compromise with the real-world pressures upon it. In contrast to that 'never quite realised knowledge', a spectator's interpretation of performance will be based in the conviction that performance effects have been deliberately produced under the choreographer's direction (Melrose 2005c). While she may not seek to alter a work's composition (Ayers 2005:60), a choreographer may, as Melrose suggested with respect to Rosemary Butcher, continue to work in epistemic terms on a piece after performance: 'Thought (as action) – critical, interrogative, speculative – continues, over years [...] Her enquiry, and her speculation, continues, long after the show has emerged, and after it has been seen by an audience' (Melrose, in Butcher et al 2005:67). It is apparent, then, from Poe's tale, that a focus on creative practice does not necessarily produce a practitioner-focused account (unless the certainty of Poe's artist is taken as analogous to *felt* certainties of a choreographer which nevertheless are not final.)

Ethics and abjection

Burrows' wry and wary meta-comment 'I feel in a terrible disadvantage', despite the fact that their shared concern seems to be his work, is significant to the present research project in the fact that it marks the need for ethical care in artist-scholar exchanges, as well as in writing in relation to performance practice. Poet and scholar Denise Riley explored the 'daily ordinariness of that volatile disquiet which dwells in self-description [...] the hesitancy, the qualifications, the awkwardness, and the degrees of secret reserve which will often shadow a self-description' (Riley 2000:9). Melrose, for example, has remarked the abjection implicit in artists' own explanations of a creative decision as "just intuitive" or "only a hunch" (Melrose 2005c). The abject

status of such explanations (by performance-makers or observers) is situated by her conviction that ‘some of us, particularly where we have ourselves been trained in the application of certain critical-theoretical or cultural theoretical traditions to arts practices, tend to see what the former enable us to see, and in so doing to overlook instances of – as well as qualities specific to – performance-making mastery’ (Melrose 2003-4). Intuition, then, is overlooked as a tool of creative professional practice when performance scholarship renders it abject (Melrose 2005c).

Abjection of this kind is not limited to performer accounts of performance scholarship. The following is an extract from an interview with dancer, choreographer and physical therapist Irmgard Bartenieff whose work was informed by studies with Rudolf von Laban in the 1920 and 1950s. She recounted how her medical colleagues failed to accept that her approach involved systematic technical expertise:

I was for seven years in charge of the polio ward [...]and that’s where I learned the most. The absence of movement taught me what movement is about, so I developed new techniques of rehabilitation. Of course, when I tried to tell the staff what it was based on, they used to say, “She’s just an intuitive person.” I heard that for many, many years. (Bartenieff in interview with Rubenfeld 1995:227)

Intuition – which Melrose asks us to qualify as expert or professional - is accorded more scholarly attention in fields that include psychology and cognitive sciences. In the early 1980s, Tony Bastick wrote that ‘the intuitive process is dependent upon the interaction of emotional states and cognitive processes. It is evident from the feeling of satisfaction and reductions in tensions that accompany an insight that emotional involvement plays a part in intuitive processes[...]The reduction in tension associated with insight also acts as an intrinsic motivation for creative workers’ (Bastick 1982:133-35). The more recent research of Antonio Damasio might elaborate Bastick’s account of emotional involvement in intuition with the finding that a human brain encodes information in sets to an emotion experienced; memory vital to the operations of expertise, as well as to everyday practices, is then triggered by the experience of that emotion (Damasio 2000 & 2006). Meanwhile, Knorr Cetina’s observation of the affective investment of the professional researcher, in her object of analysis, and of the intuitive operations that flow from that investment, in particular situations, similarly provides a basis for our understandings of certain sorts of professional decision-making (Knorr Cetina 2001).

Voicing a concern that closely relates to the account here of the abject tenor of certain explanations by artists, performance scholar and playwright Simon Jones argued that ‘theatre-making always runs the risk of remaining *proper to writing*’⁴⁹ when it is conceived as a research output of a practice as research engagement (Jones 2003). He argued for a new paradigm of Performance Studies that is predicated on performance-making not writing of performances:

What the paradigm shift requires is a *writing proper to making*. It requires of making that it flee writing [...] hence, practice-as-research is that which flees scriptural practices. And if it does so, ontologically it is also *outside of judgment*. [...] If performance flees the known, no phrasing of judgment will recognize those aspects of the performance that make it worthwhile, that is, those aspects that escape phrasing. (Jones 2003)

Jones’ polemic against unreflexive applications of scholarly modes of writing in relation to performance practices (c.f. Melrose 2003b&2003a, Phelan 1993&1997, A. Jones 1999) may have its origin in what M.A.K. Halliday has described as a historical shift in ‘semiotic mode from the dynamic to the synoptic; [...] from syntactic intricacy to lexical density’ (Halliday 1987:148), consequent on the development of a print economy. The “academic” registers of writing practiced widely within Dance Studies may be characterised as what Halliday termed the “attic style” which ‘displays a high degree of lexical density; its complexity is crystalline, and it highlights structures and the interrelationship of their parts – including, in a critical further development, *conceptual* structures’ (147). The linguistic characteristics of academic writing – without systematically-produced redundancy, employing past tenses, hypotactic in syntax, polysyllabic in diction – are not those of a rehearsal studio⁵⁰. Discourse is used in the one to analyse interpretatively, in the other to attempt to record multi-modal, situational, and affectively modulated, effects-of-(diverse)experience. Neither do they resemble the speculative modes in which an artist may reflect on her work (‘what I think I have done’; ‘I may have to’; ‘I probably need to’; ‘What I am beginning to think more and more is that’; ‘I think I can see now that’).

Halliday described oral discourse as producing ‘highly sophisticated interpretations of the natural order, rich in complementarities and thoroughly rheomodal’ (Halliday, 1987) which would seem to affirm Jackson’s suggestion that writing-trained scholars need ‘to retrain our eyes and ears’ (Jackson 2004:140). Melrose observed that artists’ metaknowledges tend to be ‘dialogue-based, often somatic, expert or technical in register and situation-specific’ (Melrose, 2002b). While

for Jones, reticence is a conscious strategy of a performance practitioner-researcher, my concern is with expressions of reticence by performance-makers whose creative work is not conceived within research objectives specific to Performance Studies. It may be therefore not that an artist ‘flees’ writing but that ‘she has systematically preferred not to’ (Melrose in Butcher et al 2005:67) – since what she has chosen to do, and does, is make new work.

One artist who has not fled writing is visual artist and scholar Yve Lomax who has produced what I judge to be an inventive enquiry into the concept of the event. Structured as a resonant meta-dialogue, the reticence she thematised is analogous, I wish to suggest, to an artist’s time-based predicament in the face of questioning about his or her creative practice, and hence illuminating to the questions of the present research:

I say it is with the event that I want to start; however, making this declaration is not without hesitation. Yes, I hesitate, for I am wondering if the event in question may well have already started. (Lomax 2004:4)

Lomax’s writing resonates for me with this quality of reflective hesitation: one question leads to another (‘if this is so shouldn’t I[...]’, and there are frequent qualifiers (‘however’, ‘not without hesitation’), restarts and metacognitive tags (‘I say it is with [...] I hesitate, for I am wondering’) and parenthetical doubt (‘But is it there[...]?’). Such writing exemplifies an ethics of writing practice in relation to art-making; speculative in syntax, reflexively qualifying its knowledge status and written with respect to the possibility of a coming event⁵¹. Lomax repeatedly foregrounds the speculative⁵² and provisional nature of her writing (‘I wonder. What is making me wonder? [...] To be sure, any answer will be made with a tentative voice’ (Lomax 2004:4)) and questions the authority of her writing (How can I build upon such ground? Hardly sufficient to build a thesis upon. Hardly enough to construct a theory. (Lomax 2004:5)).

Lomax’s concern (and the source of her hesitation as fictionalised in her text’s dialogue) appears to be with ‘starts that happen before you and I can know of them. Which is to say, what is making me wonder is a start that cannot be known and understood ahead of time’ (Lomax 2004:4-5). Her concern for a ‘start that cannot be known [...] ahead of time’ words for me a concern that Lee and I had when we inquired of the relation between the “ideas” and “images” that she had written in a

choreographic notebook and her take-up of danced moments in rehearsal that were simultaneously anticipated and unforeseen against her notebook (Lee and Pollard 2006). I hear in Lomax's enquiry the terms of J.-F. Lyotard's (1988, 1991) *The Inhuman: reflections on time*:

That it happens 'precedes', so to speak, the question pertaining to what happens. Or rather, the question precedes itself, because 'that it happens' is the question relevant as event, and it 'then' pertains to the event that has just happened. The event happens as a question mark 'before' happening as a question. *It happens* is rather 'in the first place' *is it happening, is this it, is it possible?* Only 'then' is any mark determined by the questioning: is this or that happening, is it this or something else, is it possible that this or that? (Lyotard 1988, 1991:90)

I propose to extend my reflections on Lomax's writing by taking the opportunity, at this point, of unfolding over them what Peter Hallward, translator of the French philosopher Alain Badiou's *Ethics*, has written with regard to the way Badiou orientated his 'ethics around the advent of something 'to come' that escapes incorporation within any logic of anticipation or figuration' (Badiou 2002, Hallward's introduction: xxvii). Reflected on in relation to Badiou and Lomax's writing, therefore, a choreographic process is an ethical one on the basis of the choreographer's responsibility for 'decisions that concern the unknown. The decision must always concern what I cannot *know*' (Badiou 2002, Hallward's introduction, xxv). In the case of choreographic practice in ethical terms, these are rendered more acute by the fact that the choreographer shares her unknowing with a dancer's keen and growing *need to know*, which the latter invests, in turn, in the choreographer.

To care for these questions, which continually ask of us that they be asked, is to care for the existence of the 'not yet'. It is to care for the existence of that which is not in our possession. (Lomax 2004:5)

Logically, then, a research intention to orient writing to a dance-maker's perspective on creative practice must be also ethically oriented given the particularity of the times of knowledge of performance-making to which recurring expressions of reticence by choreographers drew attention:

An idea has come to me, but why should I care to think? [...] what will come about through caring to think? I don't know the answer, but there is a curiosity. And this curiosity is not without a caring for what might come about, what might come to happen. And why should I care for what might come into existence? It only might, and this leaves me on unsafe ground. (Lomax 2004:5)

This chapter has begun to mark out an area within which an ethics of writing practice with respect to performance-making practices might be constituted. It is worth pointing out here that an ethics of practice where collaborative performance-making is involved is constantly in negotiation between practitioners and, in turn, practitioners and spectators, and in those cases it is negotiated largely through practice. Lomax's writing words what I perceive as a performance-maker's focus on: 'what might come about' (in the studio and ultimately in a future performance event); the importance of 'curiosity' which I would relate to creating and inventing; a personal-professional 'care' and investment; and an anxious lack of certainty of being on 'unsafe ground' (I note that a chapter of Tim Etchells' *Certain Fragments* was entitled 'On Risk and Investment').

Q&A: enquiring of artists' accounts of practice

[...] and if by chance the person opposite should ask you what you are writing, you have nothing to say since you don't know. (Cixous 1993:100)

Reflecting on a performance-maker's not (yet) knowing relation to an emerging performance-work reveals, in turn, a requirement for ethical care and responsibility in art-journalistic situations such as the interview and the after-show talks where artists are questioned "about their work". I propose to interrogate in this section the seemingly not unreasonable expectation that if an artist cannot talk "about her or his work" (this would be to betray a spectator-specific notion of "the work" as completed, that it tends to reify), they might be prepared to talk about how they work. I note however that Schön argued that:

When a practitioner displays artistry, his intuitive knowing is always richer in information than any description of it. Further, the internal strategy of representation, embodied in the practitioner's *feel* for artistic performance, is frequently incongruent with the strategies used to construct external descriptions of it. Because of this incongruity, for example, people who do things well often give what appear to be good descriptions of their procedures which others cannot follow. (Schön 1983:276)

Schön's conviction that a practitioner's "feel" for how they work may be incongruent with the strategies they use to account for it might be seen in relation to Bourdieu's accounts of *habitus*⁵³. Practice theorist Theodore Schatzki, however argued in the mid 1990s, contrary, it seems to me, to Bourdieu and Schön that he 'remain[s] convinced

that people's common explanations of self and others on the whole correctly articulate why they act as they do [...] [P]eople do not *systematically* offer inadequate explanations due to a fundamental divergence between their schemes and the real principles of action' (Schatzki 1996:152).

The expectation that an artist will be able and willing to provide an account of his or her practice may in philosophical terms be traced to a conviction of art's knowledge relation to *techné*. Philosopher Richard Parry, for example, commented that Aristotle on occasion referred to *techné* (usually translated as 'craft' or 'art') 'as itself also *episteme* or knowledge because it is a practice grounded in an 'account' – something involving theoretical understanding'. Citing also from Socrates' discussions, Parry observed that the knowledge of a craft goes beyond experience because it entails 'knowing how to accomplish a goal on the basis of an understanding of the goal; the understanding can be articulated in an account. The account informs and guides the skilled practice' (Parry 2003).

Philosophical enquiry does not typically question, as Bourdieu, Schön and Schatzki differently do, how that account of skilled practice is produced. I propose to add to that debate by suggesting that there may indeed be a systematic difference between an agent's action and its explanation, but that the implications need not invalidate projects that involve questioning practitioners. My proposal draws from Brian Massumi's account of how people orient themselves by landmarks that 'you habitually head for or away from[...]Landmarks are like magnetic poles that vectorize the space of orientation' (Massumi 2002:180). This kind of orientation is qualitatively different from orientation by use of a map. Massumi observed therefore that what is commonly called a "mental map" marks how we can 'orient with two systems of reference used *together*. The contradiction between them is apparent. Pragmatically, they cofunction (Massumi 2002:181). Bourdieu critiqued practitioners' explanations to researchers as "quasi-theoretical", invalid because no longer oriented to a temporally unfolding practice (Bourdieu 1972, 1977:19). Massumi's account of orientation raised the possibility however that practitioners' accounts may be "overcodings", reasonable albeit partial accounts. It may then be possible to develop mixed-sense, plural accounts that might articulate multiple co-functioning systems of reference of creative practices⁵⁴. In these sorts of terms, Melrose suggests the usefulness of the conceptual notion of multi-dimensional schematisations and apparatuses, together with the

Lyotardian notion of *dispositifs*, or grids, and the performance-event circumstance of different floorplans and positioning in the single event: a director or choreographer “juggles” abstractions and realities specific to these, making decisions at all points of possible intersection, juggling differently at different moments and stages of performance-making (Melrose 2005c).

Towards ethical co-authorship of choreographer and researcher-observer

One move towards plural, complementary accounts might lie in strategies of writing with different perspectives “on” a creative practice. The present chapter has been concerned to theorise an observed seeming reticence of certain performance-makers to speak or write of their practices - possibly because of performance-makers’ disciplinary-specific abilities to work in mixed-mode, multi-dimensional materialities. I have suggested that a dance practitioner’s reticence may be construed as a response to the difficulty of articulating (discourse-based) knowledge with respect to the times of making a performance work. What are the implications of a performance-maker’s reticence, to the present project, which aims at performance practice-focused writing? I propose to respond to this question through the particular case of writing collaboratively with Kim Brandstrup, with which this chapter opened.

Brandstrup once described to me in an informal email what he felt should be the main thrust of our article:

It is important that everything that happens in the studio is for the choreographer in order to facilitate his creative work (and not proofs of cognitive processes, visual perception etc), but the fact that it (i.e. poetic metaphor) works for them (and to a certain extent to the others in the room) allows us to, tentatively, point to a bigger context. (Brandstrup, email to Pollard)

Brandstrup’s comment seems to emphasise the fact that (as might be expected) as professional choreographer his priority and responsibility are to his creative work. He may view the writing we produced together as a reflective outcome of a choreographic research workshop that he led, an outcome within a scholarly economy which he participates in as an AHRC research fellow⁵⁵. Brandstrup’s comment by email

suggests, however, that he would only have collaborated with me if the writing also in some way contributed to his creative work. It might be, therefore, that a choreographer such as Brandstrup could be accidentally reticent on the basis of lacking epistemic investment in the outcome of the writing. His assessment of our writing will, it seems from his email, turn on how it can feed back into his choreographic processes.

If I had expected that Brandstrup would write in response to the cognitive science references I had gathered, I recognize now that I may have mistaken the economy in which Brandstrup responded. As co-authors we appear to have been operating to different epistemic modes. For Brandstrup, ideas arising through our writing may have fed directly into choreographic research; his interest in writing seems in part to have been to situate the practices he has developed to research in fields other than of the arts. I struggled to register his choreographic practices in writing and so was uncertain, from the descriptions he gave me, how the writing could ‘point to a bigger context’ as, for my part, these pointers were imperceptible since their origin was in detailed understanding of his practice (which I lacked).

My conviction is that the writing process with Brandstrup was for me challenging because I at no stage directly observed him in the studio (although I did have access to rehearsal photos and video documentation of the research workshop). Rather than argue that the writing might have been more “successful” (in/on my terms) had I been a rehearsal observer, the partial “failing” of this collaboration was salient since it prompted me to reflect on what a performance practitioner might say to a researcher, and what might be perceived by that researcher in performance modes. My enthusiasm as an observer of Lee or Butcher’s rehearsals may have hidden for me the research vital extent to which I could not write (of) what I was seeing, with certain implications for the reader of the present text: can a reader imagine Butcher’s work, or that of Lee, on the basis of the accounts I provide here? If not, what sense might be made of my own research undertaking?

My project of co-authorship between artist and researcher can be aligned in general terms to a social studies interrogation of ‘the perspective taken by the inquirer on the actors who figure in their explanations or interpretations[...] On the one hand, naturalism gives priority to the third-person or explanatory perspective; on the other, the anti-reductionism of interpretative social science argues for the priority of first- and second-person understanding’ (Bohman 1991, 2005). As philosopher James Bohman, a

former student of Jürgen Habermas, remarked, the latter approach may leave ‘an interpreter in a peculiar epistemic predicament: what started as the enterprise of seeing things from others’ points of view can at best provide the best interpretation *for us* of how things are *for them*’ (Bohman 1991, 2005). (With increasing numbers of creative practitioners working in universities as researchers the identity of “us” can no longer be equated with scholars trained to be writers.) Bohman wrote that critical social science instead requires a “second-person perspective” which coordinates ‘various points of view, minimally that of social scientists with the subjects under study.’ (Bohman 2000)

Neither the interpreter’s nor the observer’s perspectives are sufficient to specify these opaque intentional contexts for others[...] the adjudication of such conflicts requires mutual perspective taking, which is its own mode of practical reasoning. (Bohman 2005)

I propose to take up Bohman’s comment on *practical reasoning*: applied to the present research, the notion that co-authoring between a choreographer and researcher-observer might involve a distinctive mode of practical reasoning points to a possibility of understanding my writing with choreographers as inventive. (Did I experience difficulties writing with Brandstrup because we did not sufficiently reason out our mutual perspectives? We may well each have taken for granted our own understandings, as though these also applied to the co-author.) What is at stake may be as much practices of writing as the relationship of interpreter and observer. However, I note here that certain dance scholars are, as Isabelle Ginot described herself, keen to ‘redistribute power and forces between dancers and theorists, placing ‘the knowing’ on both sides, as well as the understanding or theorizing’ (Ginot 2003:23). One of Ginot’s papers indeed posed the questions: ‘what do discourses do to dances (what do we do to dances and dancers)? What do the dances do, or what don’t they do, to our discourses?’ (Ginot 2003:31). Such dance scholarship, at least in the instance of Ginot’s paper, brings limited insight to the present research since its orientation remains towards developing interpretative spectating expertise, rather than enquiring directly into practices of dance-making.

The concerns of the present chapter, by examining seriously a choreographer’s reticence, have implicitly circled around ethical and *writerly* (Barthes 1973) questions of *how* and *who* might write the *what* of dance-making. Dance scholars on occasion have framed enquiries into dance-making as an attempt “to reveal” a choreographer’s

practice (Way 2000:51). A choreographer's agency in an enquiry of this kind, however, is in structural terms passive and responsive (and may well be identified as owned by an other, colonised by academic projects and registers); the goal, in terms of teleology, is towards explanation rather than new thinking. This is far, then, from the 'mutual perspective taking' envisaged by Bohman. Approaches guided by notions of Schön's "reflective practice" would seem also to commit my research in a similar way to a project of writing *about* a choreographer's practice (and thereby "othering" it as an object of research). By contrast, in writing projects with choreographers my aim has increasingly been to ensure that writing begin from a choreographer's active interest in how their memories and reflections of dance-making might trigger writing, and be transformed as writing. Brian Massumi has written that *critical thinking* 'sees itself as uncovering something it claims was hidden' and so 'disavows its inventiveness as much as possible' (Massumi 2002:12). My research aspiration to an active collaborative writing may be hypothesized from Massumi's counter-argument in favour of '*affirmative* methods: techniques which embrace their own inventiveness and are not afraid to own up to the fact that they may add (if so meagrely) to reality' (Massumi 2002:12). Lomax succinctly encapsulated for me this concern when she wrote:

And this begs the question, how can I speak of this event? How can I speak *with* it rather than speak for it, or indeed speak at it? (Lomax 2004:6)

I want to begin to respond to Lomax's question, so far as I can take it to be a question to be asked of the present research project, by a further question posed by the philosopher Alain Badiou which I speculate may be fundamental to a creative epistemic practice:

There is always only one question in the ethic of truths: how will I, as some-one *continue* to exceed my own being? How will I link the things I know, in a consistent fashion, via the effects of being seized by the not-known? One might also put it like this: how will I continue *to think*? (Badiou 2002:50)

The predicament Badiou named is not, I would argue, made prominent in dance scholarship that "reveals" choreographic process, but should be heard at all times in the present research undertaking. It has therefore a praxiological intent wedded to its epistemological enquiry. Adopting Lomax's phrase, I am investigating whether writing by a choreographer (which may also be co-authored with a researcher) can be written *with* his or her practice, rather than speak *for* or *of* it. My argument is that such writing

be considered as inventive by how it instantiates a partial object in a choreographer's ongoing epistemic practice, one which is responsive to the timing of a choreographer's knowledge of dance-making (that is to its speculative knowledge modes (Melrose 2005c, Rosenthal 1986)).

I am drawing on Badiou's philosophical question which I judge can be brought to bear on the call for an ethics of writing made in the present research with respect to performance-making practices. In closing the present chapter, however, I wish to mark one further theorisation of a practitioner's reticence. Such reticence to speak of or about their practice may extend further than the time-based difficulties of a choreographer's knowledge. Roland Barthes commented in *Mythologies*:

If I am a woodcutter and I [...] name the tree I am felling [...] I do not speak about it. This means that my language is operational, transitively linked to its object [...] But if I am not a woodcutter, [...] I can only speak *about* it, *on* it [...] I no longer have anything but an intransitive relationship with the tree; this tree is no longer the meaning of reality as a human action, it is an *image-at-one's-disposal*. (cited in Scholes 1985:305-20)

The discursive options available to a practitioner as Barthes sees them therefore are 'To write the tree, or to write *about* it' (Scholes 1985:305-20). (If I write 'of' a choreographer's practice, my grammar marks the presumption that I acquire a representation of her practice as an object of knowledge.) Barthes wrote what I judge to be an exemplar of a practitioner writing in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1990, 1977). Notably for the present research, Barthes' practitioner discourse is composed of fragments, which I read in light of the constitutive difficulty argued in this chapter of having complete, certain knowledge from a practitioner's perspective (see also *On 'Writing' and 'Reading'*, on the writing of Tim Etchells, and Lyotard 1988, 1991). The writing is concerned with a lover's anxiety and speculations about the loved one, even as a practitioner might describe an ongoing creative process; entries include 'unknowable', 'anxiety', 'waiting', 'outcomes', 'to write'. Barthes described how he employed 'a "dramatic" method in *A Lover's Discourse* which renounces examples and rests on the single action of a primary language (no metalanguage). The description of the lover's discourse has been replaced by its simulation' (Barthes 1990, 1977:3). I wonder how Barthes' approach might be productive of performance-making focused writing? (Lomax's book, from which I have previously cited (although not performance-making focused) is dialogic but strikes me as metadiscursive in register throughout.)

The chapter which follows will examine how the present enquiry sought to engage with the signature practices of individual choreographers. What Barthes offered a reader was a “structural” portrait, ‘the site of someone speaking within himself, *amorously*, confronting the other (the loved object), who does not speak’ (Barthes 1990, 1977:3) The lover - the practitioner of Barthes’ text – ‘is not to be reduced to a simple symptomal subject’ as might have been the case for “psychoanalytic” analysis in the 1970s (Barthes 1990, 1977:3). Barthes’ simulation of practitioner writing may therefore be of limited guidance in my praxiological enquiry into developing writing that can respond to the highly individual practices of choreographers. Barthes’ writing, in the historical context of late structuralism and semiotics, does not seem to be concerned, as mine must be, to engage *with* a changing process which calls for inventiveness (there is no secure position from which to produce an account ‘about’).

Lomax, I would argue, suggests in the quotation below a compelling qualitative change that occurs from a process of performance-making to a stabilization and interruption of that process as performance; ‘with the attainment of knowledge [...] I come to exist differently’. Not only the performance work exists differently then, but the practitioner changes her or his mode, moving at least temporarily into the audience as spectator. My challenge is to produce writing with choreographers that is focused in the times of their performance-making, prior to the attainment of any spectating-based certitude, but with the latter - and the expert work that finishes the work (Lyotard 1988, 1991), including the impress of the logics of production - in mind.

Although the event in question remains ‘up in the air’, I’m wondering if there is something happening with this poorly grounded indefinite phenomenon that is asking for a re-thinking of what is involved in the attainment of knowledge[...] Without a word said perhaps it is saying: with the attainment of knowledge there doesn’t come the grasping of an object and the gaining of an acquisition but rather a different way of existing. I do not gain a possession; on the contrary, something else happens: I come to exist differently. (Lomax 2004:6)

6th “research companion”: collaborative writing by Goat Island (on Appendix CD-ROM)

In reflecting on my collaboration with Kim Brandstrup, I was reading, as “research companion”, a piece of writing published by Goat Island, a Chicago-based and highly respected collaborative performance group founded in 1987⁵⁶. The writing is entitled ‘CVZVLC (Chicago – Vienna – Zagreb – Vienna – London/Chicago), 465 Sentences for June 2001, Goat Island Collaborative Journal Project’. It was written by Goat Island members Karen Christopher, Matthew Goulish, Lin Hixson, Mark Jeffery, CJ Mitchell and Bryan Saner but also includes questions from the following who are not of Goat Island: Marin Blasevic, Natasha Govedic, Veronica Kaup-Hasler, Mario Kovac and Sergei and Nikolina Pristas. The reader is advised at this point to access the full text of the collaborative journal reproduced with permission on the Appendix CD-ROM (*On ‘Not (Yet) Knowing’*).

Given the dearth of extended practitioner-focused writing of performance-making, Goat Island are unusual as they have completed a series of collaborative writing projects which have been variously performed and published, for example as “reading companion” booklets of critical and creative responses linked to each of their recent works and in a Manchester University Press publication. Although Goat Island write collaboratively with one another, they also sometimes include questions and writing by outsiders including external researchers. Both the collaborative nature of their writing, then, and the fact that they incorporate material by outsiders drew me to reflect on their writing in the context of my own research enquiry.

I was struck in particular to how Goat Island carry multiple objectives in their writing projects since I was aware that I and the choreographers with whom I was writing collaboratively sometimes shared and sometimes had divergent objectives. Goat Island have written that “We want to destabilize the boundaries between critical modes and the creative modes in order to enrich them both” (from the workshop/education pages at www.goatsislandperformance.org accessed September 2005). An explanatory note to one project, for example, listed amongst its objectives: ‘documenting the development of our new performance work’, ‘keeping a diary’ and ‘writing creatively’ (‘The Year Long Writing Project’ 2002). I began to speculate that an understanding of Goat Island’s writing might inform or underpin the ways I was

working with choreographers to the end of producing creative, documentary and analytic modes of writing.

Furthermore, I was curious to respond to Goat Island's writing having written already of an extract from a book by one of its members, Matthew Goulish. How different would the modes and strategies of the collaborative writing be, to which he had contributed?

Journals

One locus for an enquiry into writing by performance-makers is in practice-focused writing kept by many practitioners in notebooks in the course of and as part of their performance-making practice. My responses to the Goat Island journal have been written in tandem with my editing of and reflections on research journals that I kept during my collaborations with choreographers Kim Brandstrup and Rosemary Lee. I began myself to keep journals whilst observing these choreographers at work (informed by the approaches to journal writing in fieldwork methodologies of critical anthropology, see *In Proximity*).

In my experience, as dancer with emerging professional choreographers and more recently as rehearsal observer, notebooks seem to be used by artists to gather observations, ideas, quotations or sketches for new work (along with perhaps telephone numbers, production notes and measurements). In this sense, notebooks are tools and resources for performance-making. Performance scholar Scott Delahunta described how contemporary choreographers and dancers:

employ the page as a toolkit for self-reflection/examination, for the collective documenting and sharing of creative ideas, scripts and scores, capturing the dynamics of gesture and recording notes for further reference. As such the page becomes an interactive object inextricably linked with the processes of dance making. (Delahunta 2004:67)

A diary or journal, on the other hand, is structured differently and responds to more formalised genres. Typically, a diary produces day by day narrative snapshots of a writer's experiences and is addressed to an imagined reader (perhaps a future self of the writer) even if the diary is not intended to be re-read, whereas a notebook is a frequent creative tool for the choreographer, a diary, if kept at all, will usually remain in her or his private life.

Shared by both notebooks and journals, however, is the fact that they are kept over time and so are to be understood serially. An artist's notebook or journal, then, is of interest to my research as it is a writing that can mark, document or in some way respond to how s/he makes work alongside the times of making. By writing close to the times of making an artist cannot, deliberately or otherwise, calculate what is said from a retrospective position of knowledge with regard to how the work in process will have developed (unless that is, he or she returns to and edits that writing).

In the course of the present research several choreographers allowed me to see their unpublished notebooks. I also read published examples of artists' diaries, for example, as published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Allen 2001) and the occasional journal entries published by Carol Brown on her company website describing current projects and reflecting on her creative experiences (www.carolbrowndances.com). The journal examined in the present chapter as "research companion" was written by Goat Island as a company project for one month.

'A writerly habitus'⁵⁷

In productive mode, I am seeking to read Goat Island's journal as companion to own research undertaking. I am prompted by Goat Island's comment, in the journal's introduction, that they will use the process of writing a journal as 'a way of producing written documentation of our experiences in Austria and Croatia [while touring], and to assist in processing those experiences'. My aim in keeping a journal appears to me partly comparable in that I wished to document and reflect on how I was working with Kim Brandstrup. (I write 'appears to' circumspectly, aware as I am of the ethical requirement on me to be cautious and reflexive each time that I interpret Goat Island's writing, thereby seeming to speak for it while unavoidably objectifying it, Melrose 2005a). Unlike Goat Island, I am concerned with a writing of choreographic practice through dialogue with the choreographer written from the perspective of an outsider writer-researcher. The Goat Island journal is written to heterogeneous registers, has multiple writers and an imaginative, creative dimension. I am supposing furthermore that the touring experiences that Goat Island refer to will concern 'mixed-mode and multi-dimensional, multi-participant theoretical practices' (Melrose 2005a⁵⁸), unlike the solitary and single-mode practice I adopt in my journal.

This supposition comes not directly from having been either a spectator of a Goat Island performance, a participant in their workshops or an observer of their rehearsal process but from what I have read of the company's work through 'secondary production' (Melrose 2005a) in the form of writing by both Goat Island and its commentators. (I did however watch the company present one of their collaborative writing projects at the ResCen Nightwalking conference, London, 2002). On this basis, can I validly draw upon my responses to Goat Island's writing to pursue questions of practitioner-focused writing of professional performance-making?

I might defend myself by the argument that my concern here is with writing by professional artists of their performance practices and that other areas of my thesis look to writing by or with artists whose performances and making processes I know at first hand. Yet my qualms remain: how would my responses differ had I a detailed and multi-dimensional schematic knowledge of Goat Island's modes of working – albeit still a spectator's knowledge? For example, on occasion as I read, I feel "at a loss" to know how to respond to their journal. When I reflect on this, I realise that I have tended to orientate my reading by the "empirical fit"⁵⁹ that I make between what Goat Island write and my understanding of how they work as practitioners. That is, the interpretative apparatus I bring as reader is to evaluate the writing and attribute "meaning" by how it reinforces or adds to my schematic understanding of how they work. I do not know what "to do" with those passages of 'CVZVLC' which I cannot align to my (limited) working hypothesis about their performance practices. My reading falters, then, when I sense that what they write correlates with an area of their practice to which I should have (but lack) access. Without this, I cannot identify myself with the expected reader that I sense is called up through the journal's modes. Equally, I cannot react to what is written by producing it as "making sense" and "meaningful". The only "secondary production" of response triggered for me when I come to write formally is the meta-reflexive kind that I am engaged in here.

Raised here, therefore, are questions as to practices of reading arts-practitioners' writing. Will readers of practitioner-focused writing find it "pointless" if they cannot point it back, and in Deleuzian terms (Deleuze 1993, 2003), fold it over their knowledge of that particular practitioner's work?⁶⁰ And if a reader's knowledge is tied to his/her knowledge as spectator, how will such knowledge be brought to bear on a writing (of) practitioner theoretics (assuming this to be achievable)? I recognise that

these questions underscore in particular a project such as *Beached: a commonplace book* in which practice-focused writing is not critically and interpretatively framed.

My observations betray the truth, in my case at least, of Melrose's notion that 'much performance-theoretical writing, published under the heading of Performance Studies, has been put together on the basis of *the presuppositions of a spectator theory of knowledge*' (Melrose 2005a). I find myself unable to write where my spectator knowledge falters. This Performance Studies 'writerly habitus'⁶¹ then will work against my proposed research, aiming as it does at individual practitioner-focused perspectives on performance-making. (Inadequate, too, will be reliance on an observer's perspective to achieve a practitioner-focus since, as Melrose emphasises, this perspective is still aligned to a spectator's position rather than to a practitioner's position (Melrose 2005a).)

As I have described, my intention was to read the Goat Island journal productively as a "tutor text" and then to mobilise my reading as I kept a journal. I want to speculate now that by introducing such an approach I might begin to interrupt or modulate a 'writerly habitus' developed by a long education in critical analytic writing production. In spite of these various difficulties, as I reflect below, is that in practice I do not know how to begin. In spite of all these difficulties, my desire to respond productively to Goat Island's writing as a way to develop my research seems sympathetic to one aspect at least of how they describe their performance-making:

Goat Island performance work is a series of responses: to the exercises we give ourselves, to our surroundings, to the events of the world, but mostly, to each other. We perform responses for each other back and forth. The conversation goes further than were we just talking. At the end of the conversation we have a piece in front of us and it's ready to show.
(www.goatlandperformance.org Accessed September 2006)

'CVZVLC (Chicago – Vienna – Zagreb – Vienna – London/Chicago), 465 Sentences for June 2001, Goat Island Collaborative Journal Project'

In the introduction to 'CVZVLC' CJ Mitchell, Goat Island's company manager, wrote that:

The system we adopted for the journal was a way to control our collaboration. With six of us writing, we needed to give ourselves a structure that limited not the content but the length of our writing. Furthermore, we didn't want to feel like we were working ourselves to the bone; our main goal was to perform the

show and that had to be our main focus. If the writing project felt like too much work it would lose its sense of fun.

The opening sentences employ a neutral-sounding, explanatory register (that is obedient to schooled, internalised conventions as to phrasing and word choice appropriate to matter-of-fact, undisputed matters that are to be communicated simply and clearly). Several of the terms have a technical but non-specific connotation ('system', 'control', 'collaboration') and its mode, typical of innumerable administrative reports, might be termed "synoptic", setting something in place, and keeping it there (Halliday 1987:146-8). This mode shifts, however, and becomes inflected by a more casual and arguably dynamic mode in the second sentence; 'With six of us writing...'. In these two sentences, the reader has been given a fact – 'the system we adopted' – and a partial explanation, 'to control our collaboration', which is then elaborated on, 'we needed to give ourselves a structure'. 'Furthermore', starts the next sentence, a rather weighty and formal connective that promises to continue this logic of hierarchic explanation.

My sense of Goat Island from this passage is of a group (or company) of people who plan ahead carefully, thinking through the task that they have set themselves. The idea I have generated about their work ethic is undercut however with knowing, deflating irony by the explanation (and colloquialism) that follows: 'we didn't want to feel like we were working ourselves to the bone'. According to the form of a report write-up, suggested in the first sentences, these personal reasons should have remained unsaid; they relate to factors usually considered external to the journal and, by convention, ought to cause a reader to lower their sense of its value. Or rather, different economies of production are signalled, and ordered attitudinally. The care given to the journal is calculated and rationed hierarchically against other responsibilities; 'our main goal was to perform the show'. What is signalled perhaps is that Goat Island will alternate between writing with, and then against, the grain of the dominant writing convention, describing complex priorities, motivations and dynamics of their work as performers some of which are more typically left unwritten. Their comment too adds an important proviso to my own research as it reminds that performance-makers will often view writing as, in several senses, a secondary activity. Note however that one of Goat Island's main audiences is university-based, and brings to their performances a university-trained expert spectating; they *workshop* new material in the university context, and this pre-production processing is informed, on

that basis, by performing arts' student and university researchers' undertaking. They '*know what*' researchers and students want, and what they might ask and take for answers.

The importance of keeping 'a sense of fun' strikes me as a practitioner-centred remark, particularly as 'fun' is not a quality that I would otherwise attribute to much of what they have written. The system they refer to determines the number of sentences they write on any day against its date, so that the number of sentences written each day increases systematically across the month. Evidently they might have decided to write, say, five sentences daily, if limiting length was their sole concern. Between the lines, then, I sense that there is a sense of 'fun' to obeying the apparently arbitrary structure that they have set themselves. This I relate to what I have observed, and others have written, of how contemporary performance-makers will sometimes give themselves over to seemingly absurdist or reductive tasks in developing a performance, investing games with importance without forgetting the incongruity.

By following a system, I sense too a conviction that the journal might "hold together" as a creative entity in part by the effect of daily increase which gives freer and freer rein (to continue the control metaphor) to each writers' style and interests. On the other hand, their system of control has in fact produced a burgeoning writing whose entries become longer and longer, halted arbitrarily at the last day of June. As the days go on, their system undermines the concept of a journal whereby the events of any day may be recorded and contained in entries of more or less similar length.

The inventive form produced through their system of writing signals that the reading engagement expected of a reader may be unusual. Indeed, the reading engagement anticipated by the Goat Island writers will have shifted over the course of the month when a decision was made to publish the journal (in the Croatian journal, *Frakcija*) that was initially kept to share with one another within the group. We might want to reflect on shifts in writing mode that this brings. Mitchell, in his introduction, comments too on a further shift:

While in Zagreb, we met with members of the editorial board of *Frakcija*, who asked us to incorporate into the journal answers to a series of questions they generated in response to the performance. We have included these questions within the journal – to indicate when the questions arrived, and to reflect the interests and concerns of the questioners. It should also be said that while the questions were not comprehensively answered, the final entries certainly

reflect a shift in approach to our journal writing, and are perhaps more reflective of the performance for that reason.

As I write of 'CVZVLC' I will be attentive to both this series of three sets of questions and to how Goat Island incorporate them into their entries. Several of the questions are formulated in academic, abstract registers which differ from the journal entries (Goat Island do not comment as to whether the questioners had read any of the journal entries before they posed their questions). Some questions interrogate Goat Island's investment in their art (is art a 'theological discipline' requiring 'dedication, vocation [...]spirituality'), the group's organisation and patterns of meeting, and their political commitment beyond performance-making ('Are you concerned in some activist projects outside theatre'). Other questions concern how audiences respond and how the performers respond to them. Eight questions, given by members of another performance company, focus on qualities they appear to have sensed in performance and how material is developed.

As I move on to detailed assessments of particular journal entries, I will comment on Goat Island's inventive, indirect responses to these questions (which are never precisely answers) and consider whether by this means, Goat Island modulate the sometimes critical registers and spectatorial perspective of their questioners. The exchange between these expert performance-makers and their questioners (a journal editor, theatre directing student, theatre critic and other performance-makers) strikes me as a metaphorical "test-case" for my own enquiry into how arts practitioners engage with writing of the performance-making. Yet again, the enquiry differs from that of the choreographers with whom I have worked in research terms, since Goat Island slip readily into a university teaching setup, in the processes of making new work, whereas Brandstrup and Butcher make new work that imagines a wider and more diverse, public audience.

In significant ways, then, the journals I write as a university-based observer of experts arts-practitioners' processes cannot operate textually as that of Goat Island, even if I adopt theirs as guide to my own. The introduction offers the journal 'as suggestive of ways for others to creatively approach their lives'. While I would not propose such an "applied humanist" application for my own writing, this comment does perhaps validate my attempt to write a journal "with" theirs and offers an example of creative practitioners responding to critical-analytical questions without

reproducing those terms and theoretical grounds; that is, without perhaps being othered by the spectatorial positioning and discourse-production.

A journal that records artists' (professional) lives without artificially fencing off an art category of experiences and activities (as I inevitably do, as outsider), is not then a piece of writing that I could write collaboratively with an artist. In consequence, however, the journal form is of significance to my research *if it can resist spectator perspectives in and after the event of spectating*. Extending from this, I would argue that it is unfortunate for my project that Goat Island do not provide explicit commentary on how the journal helped them to process their experiences. I am curious as to whether they read one another's entries at the time and to their attitudes towards responding to external questions.

Commentary on selected entries

Friday, June 1st 1: Mark – 1 sentence

'Chicago: Can you feel an earthquake halfway across the world? (00:10, rainstorm, corner of North/Clark – a goodbye)'.

This first entry by Mark Jeffery is highly condensed. Chicago, one of the places signalled as important in the journal's title, is the both the first word and Goat Island's home from which they left that day on tour, the point of departure for what is effectively a travel journal is given. The colon that follows suggests some sort of parity with the subsequent question, as if the one defines the other in riddle-form.

Alternatively, the colon creates the character of Chicago together with his scripted question. The note in parenthesis as to time, weather, place and activity then functions as stage direction.

A sense of emotional charge is strong in this first entry; the writer is setting off on a journey 'halfway across the world' – does he fear a metaphorical earthquake? Does the detail of time and place mark a personal epicentre? Or does his question come from nervous excitement, as a performance-maker before a premiere? We can only imagine the answer. The quality of emotional resonance that I read in these lines is triggered by the intersection I hear between this entry and the title of the piece that Goat Island travel to perform, 'It's an Earthquake in My Heart'. 'Corner of North/Clark' may carry local meaning to a reader familiar with Chicago but by hypotyposis (Melrose 2003a) I imagine a vivid scene out of these brief details of two

people (only one goodbye is mentioned) stepping apart at a junction during a rainstorm in the flat hours after midnight. The condensed syntax does not ascribe either agency or the movement of time, only an elliptic, intense fragment. Does the removed quality reflect self-consciousness on Mark Jeffery's part at the task he has been set, to start the journal with but a single sentence?

Tuesday, June 5th

5: Lin – 5 sentences

This day, at noon, was lifted out of light and placed in the tall, black room of The Künstlerhaus Theater.

It took six hours to construct thirty lighting cues for our performance *It's and Earthquake in My Heart*. It took six seconds for the computerized lighting board to snatch them away.

In the hour before night, we began again from the beginning.

Scott's prerecorded, boomed voice stopped diversionary conversations with a "Hey".

This is the first entry which explicitly refers to their final rehearsals before the performances at the Vienna Festival. I read a rueful quality to Lin Hixson's first sentence; to open with the emphatic deixis on 'This day...' suggests a public declamation by some charismatic, persuasive speaker. At a sudden stroke their lives (metonymically) are broken off and closed into the gloom of a black-box theatre. Behind Hixson's dispassionate record of the ironic mirror of 'six hours to construct', 'six seconds [...] to snatch them away' we might imagine a dispiriting, frustrating and above all stressful and long day, compounded by the fact that, when touring, Goat Island must rapidly learn the peculiarities of each new theatre's system. I project onto Hixson's lines a resigned, humorous pragmatism to her experience of this technical rehearsal rehearsal (what is operating here is *hypotyposis*: at source there is only what I take to be a vivid sketch, to be used as symptom, into which I seem to read a fragment of an other's life (Melrose 2003a, 2002c)). Scott Gillette is the Goat Island technician; perhaps I might interpret the pre-recording of his voice as a light-hearted device that Goat Island use as a pre-agreed signal to keep everyone focused on the task in hand?

I am drawn by this entry as I realise that I have rarely read an account of technical production, in performance writing. The reference here to production

processes is particularly unusual in that it turns not on an interpretative relation to the performance but on the subjective (but still professional) experience of someone working in that technical rehearsal. By taking up so much of the necessarily limited time available for technical rehearsal, setting the lighting cues may have had an impact on the quality of the performance. Yet what I am reading is more concerned with the rhythms of rehearsal, of the demands on the company, and their dedication and stamina, of working for as long as the task requires.

Wednesday, June 6th

6: Bryan – 6 sentences

When I woke up this morning my left hand seemed familiar to me. We put on wet clothes for the photo shoot and a jackhammer disrupts the concentration of the civil war rehearsal. The German nickel metal hydride rechargeable batteries run for 23:19 in our fans with the sound tube attached, but we decide to go with Adrian's suggestion and take Bryan's sound tube out to give it a longer life. Then at 4:00 we began to look forward to performing the work. The Dress rehearsal goes very well and it feels like the premiere for us because Hortensia and Katrin and other Festival staff come to see. Katrin says she would not change a single second.

The opening sentence of this entry seems to me to have a quite particular function: a surreal, estranged experience that might be the consequence of a lingering dream or of the disorientation of sleep deprivation; 'my left hand seemed familiar to me'. In other words, I am using it once again in terms of my sense of its empirical fit with an experience familiar to me. In isolation, it is nonetheless a curious comment to find in a journal. It suggests to me a broader situation and experience only partially confided.

From other references to hands in the journal, I begin to wonder if hands are in some way thematically important to the work that Goat Island were about to perform that day. (Saner also wrote on June 28, 'I wake up at 3:30am and spend the morning trying to distinguish between trivial and important details and then notice a wart on my left ring finger'.) If this is the case, is Bryan Saner's wakening experience suggestive of how the ways in which performance work saturates the experience and perception of its performers (and is heightened in the intense period around a premiere). It seems, in addition, to function *for me* to conjure up a practitioner perception of the time before making the show public. What would I make of this fragment of writing, however, if I lacked an abstract knowledge of pre-performance circumstances (and what Melrose has called the "apparatuses at work" in them)?

The entries written while Goat Island were performing then may be subtly resonant with their sense of this piece and with how it was being received by audiences even if it appears to be 'about' something else. I am arguing that if their core preoccupation at that time was with this work that they were performing then this will have coloured the observations recorded in the journal.

Elsewhere, I have theorised the project of writing with Rosemary Lee as part of an epistemic engagement that is ongoing not only through writing but through certain of her conversations, reading and performance-making. As a form then, an artist's journal may produce some record of an artist's epistemic engagement as it continues beyond the studio and theatre (that is, beyond where an observer or spectator might register the effects of that engagement). In the case of the Goat Island journal, for example, Saner's observation perhaps documents a psycho-somatic event within the multi-modal spectrum of how he works on a piece (here as one individual but in a collaborative process), but it may equally signal constitutive ambiguities in one company member's perception of the project to which he or she contributes (Melrose, email to Pollard, 2006). It strikes me then, that Saner, when he had this waking experience (and when he later recorded it as an observation in his journal), may have been working epistemically on the piece he would perform that day without needing either explicitly to think of the piece as he woke or later wrote. Without being worded as such, then, the entry is suggestive to me of, and evokes, the multiple dimensions of collaborative performance-making as epistemic activity. At this point, I begin to realise that the artist's journal as a form may be of compelling importance to me if I am to theorise how writing concerned with a particular process of performance-making may itself be understood as of an ongoing epistemic project of which were performance-making was one part.

Reading Saner's entry, I began to want to see the piece so as to expand my responses to the journal. This raises questions for me about publishing writing with a relation to performance-making without accompanying documentation of the performance made (something that arose in discussion between Rosemary Lee and myself in creating *Beached: a commonplace book* (2006 forthcoming)). Acutely the question for a reader is this: to what extent can you imagine the work, if you have not seen it? To what extent, and how can you avoid participating in my own rendering of a work that has been made public?

Later in the entry, Saner recorded a technical decision over a battery to a level of detail redundant to a reader not directly involved in the production. I do not know what is significant about this particular type of battery for 'our fans', whether a 23:19h duration reflects efficiency or what the effect on production will be of taking the sound tubes out - unless it serves to indicate the work of expert collaboration *as work*, not simply as thematic or aesthetic work, but as ongoing and otherwise unimaginable technical engagement⁶². I wonder if Saner recorded this decision wryly to point to one of an array of minutely detailed and complexly negotiated decisions during technical rehearsals which those unfamiliar with performance-making may be unaware of. (I am curious too that they accept 'Adrian's suggestion'. The reference is seemingly to writer and performance artist Adrian Heathfield who accompanied Goat Island for a few days, but was not one of their members. This reference suggests that he was able, despite his status as university-trained writer/researcher, to contribute to the production work at a highly detailed level.) His entry suggests to me to be otherwise an unrealistic preoccupation with battery performance as I am sceptical (without evidence) that this 23:19h duration is repeatable. My sense is that he recorded this decision as one out of many made that day, to give a reader a "flavour" of that rehearsal. The over-determined level of detail from the perspective of a reader external to Goat Island, including in the use of proper names, suggests what might appear to be near fanatical expenditure of energy and thought in what to an outsider appears a trivially small issue. (The third person reference to 'Bryan's sound tube' is also curious).

The final two sentences of Saner's entry strike me as more typical of journal writing. Saner's comment on the dress rehearsal suggests a sense of pride and pleasure in their work and documents how performers respond to audiences and to the support sensed from the 'in-house' teams of the theatres to which they tour the show.

A few days later, Karen Christopher's entry on June 10 also elliptically suggests how, as a performer, she is affected by the responses of audiences and theatre staff, along with a more mundane sense of the working day rhythms of performing: 'Waiting backstage for the last ever Vienna audience that will half leave in scorn haste and half shout bravo at the end of the show... The red railing rushes up four flights as I will when this performance is over. After the show sandwiches and packing. The theatre bartender loved the performance and brought sandwiches to us saying: I love it when people like you come here.'

Sequences

As I read, I encounter echoes, often thematic, between comments made by the same and different writers on different days and which perhaps relate to *It's an earthquake in my heart*. The echoes intrigue me since Goat Island do not comment on whether they read one another's journal entries at the times of writing. For example, Matthew Goulish wrote on June 2 of 'two white moments... white shoes.... We walk around Rachel Whiteread's holocaust memorial... we find it white'. Karen Christopher wrote on June 3, 'Because of our state of mind yesterday, today we have only red bell peppers and strawberries (red like the uniforms of the Austrian Airlines flight attendants) to eat with our bread and butter'. Then on June 10, she observed 'The red railing rushes up ...I counted the red shirts in the audience' . On June 20 she noted that '... outside the window the poppies in the fields are red. And there is a red door into the hillside.' Mark Jeffery too observed on June 28 'vast clumps of crimson poppies bleed and memorialize the fields'. These comments resonate with several references to a 'civil war' scene within *It's an earthquake in my heart*. Other war allusions include that of Lin Hixson, June 16, 'There is no mention of war in The Melk Abbey guidebook...' and Matthew Goulish on June 13 'quickly built Nazi ammunition storage towers', on June 29, 'to resist the violence of war', and on June 22, 'Today commemorates the 1945 liberation of Zagreb'. CJ Mitchell also observed, on June 23, 'Yesterday was a public holiday for antifascism after World War II...'

External questions

In a final section of responses to Goat Island's journal project, I want to focus on the questions from outsiders to Goat Island that were given to the company on days later in the month as the project came to be adapted for publication. 'What is a hand?' for example was one in a set of questions given by Veronica Kaup-Hasler to Goat Island on June 19⁶³. Bryan Saner responded promptly to this question in the next day's entry, echoing Heidegger: 'The hand is the object that transforms the trees into chairs'. Seemingly in consequence of needing to respond to questions, the journal entries become increasingly reflective and appear less responsive to the day to day activities related in earlier entries.

References to hands recur through further journal entries and are sometimes directly related to Goat Island's performance *It's an earthquake in my heart*. For

example, on June 19, outsider Veronica Kaup-Hasler asked the journal writers ‘What is a hand?’ to which Saner and CJ Mitchell responded on June 20 and 21 respectively. Kaup-Hasler’s succinct question seems one that Goat Island readily responded to perhaps because it may have related to an existing theme of their performance work. However, another question relates to a moment of interaction with the audience observed by the questioner: in the responses, the identity of the writing as journal entries seems to unravel. I cited in *Positioning*, Pierre Bourdieu’s assertion (1972) that an unreflective observing standpoint constitutes practical activity as spectacle, leading a researcher to ‘insist on trying to answer questions which are not and cannot be questions for practice’. It might be that ‘What is a hand?’ can be understood in Bourdieu’s terms as a question for practice, in contrast to a spectating-linked question, and philosophical question, which seem to interrupt their practice of journal writing. In choreographic practice, the dancer’s hand is multi-functional *in fact*, a potential site for spectators’ focus; in spectator-specific terms, that focus may, on the basis of regularities in the choreographic practice, resonate with philosophical writing and reading. On this basis, the resonant focus can be identified to function, once again, in terms of hypotyposis: the (choreography of the) hand, which recurs, can serve as a vivid contraction, that for some spectators - but not others - triggers their own engagement with philosophical writing. Can we say on this basis, however, that the practitioner “knows” that writerly connection⁶⁴?

On June 27, Jeffery seemed to respond indirectly to a question as to whether non-American audiences are disadvantaged as spectators if they are not aware of American cultural codes that tap into childhood nostalgia. Jeffery’s journal entry does not explicitly respond to what is again a spectating-based question, but rather seems to modulate it strategically within a description of a bus ride and observations between the UK and US.

As the journal continues it is inundated with requests for detailed information that seem not to be met by the journal writers. The intervention of outsiders’ questions which might have been expected to cohere the journal by providing a common point of reference for all the journal writers appear, rather, as false starts. As the month continued, the number of sentences systematically increased until the last entries provide a myriad modes and concerns; the sightseeing of a travel journal, reflections on performances, dream narratives. Note too, however, the extent to which Goat Island

journal-keepers refuse to play out a game of question and answer that they have themselves initiated.



Fig. 11 Performance photograph of Rosemary Butcher's *Scan* (1999) with dancers Henry Montes, Fin Walker/Rahel Vonmoos, Lauren Potter, Jonathan Burrows. Reproduced with permission of Butcher and Melrose 2005

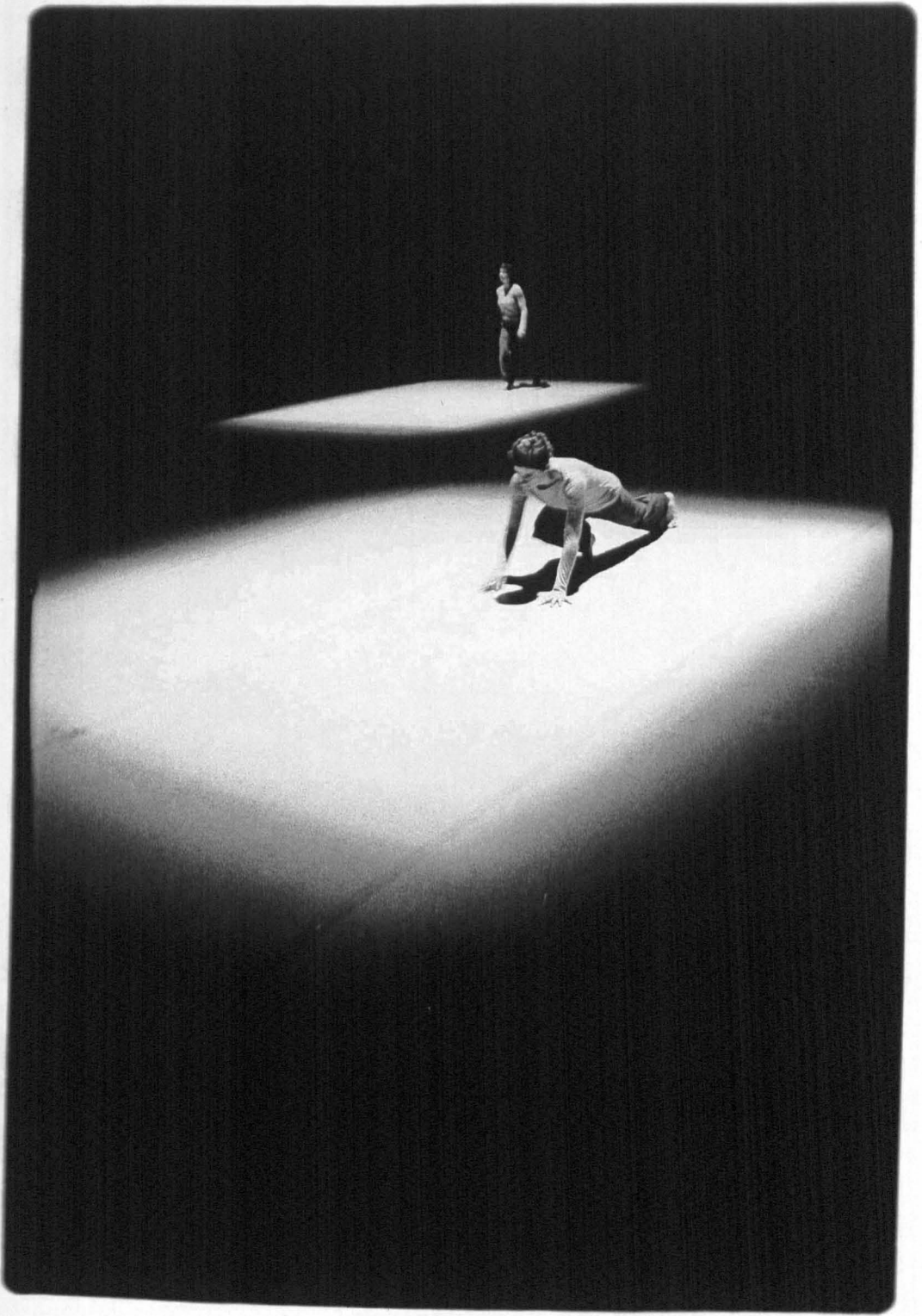


Fig. 12 Performance photograph of Rosemary Butcher's *Still-Slow-Divided* (2002) showing dancers Rahel Vonmoos and Deborah Jones. Reproduced with permission of Butcher & Melrose 2005



Fig. 13 Still images from *Undercurrent* (2001) a film by Rosemary Butcher, film-maker Cathy Greenhalgh and composer Cathy Lane. Reproduced with permission from Butcher, R. & Melrose, S. (eds.) *Rosemary Butcher: Choreography, Collisions and Collaborations*. Enfield, Middlesex University Press

Collection and Change:

Writing 'Rosemary Butcher'; the exemplary; the collection

I've worked by collecting objects, orchestrating relationships, and inventing fluid taxonomies, while not excluding myself from them. (Hiller 2000)

Joseph Beuys demonstrated how to do theory as sculpture, or rather, as craft, working with felt and fat, researching their reality or "Gestalt" [...] Beuys was working out in practice what a philosopher such as Gilles Deleuze attempts as a thought experiment, using the properties of felt as a way to think about certain abstract questions. (Ulmer 2003:35)

Processes of writing with Rosemary Butcher (on Appendix CD-ROM)

Across the preceding chapters, I have reflected on my ongoing and evolving practice of writing collaboratively with choreographers and I have begun to theorise some of the concerns (including those ethical) that arise in the course of such a practice and in producing the present meta-commentary linked to that practice. The published writings I have co-authored with choreographers, reproduced in the accompanying disk, are, as noted before, *partial* objects instantiated, for example, in terms of my ongoing collaboration with a choreographer, in terms of the creative, philosophical enquiries of that choreographer and in terms of the present research project.

The present chapter will focus on my ongoing writing collaboration with British choreographer Rosemary Butcher. Butcher's choreographies have been recognised in key surveys of both contemporary British and international dance, including Stephanie Jordan's seminal *Striding Out* (1992) and *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers* (Bremser 1999). (For a reader unfamiliar with Butcher's work, the Appendix CD-ROM, *Collection and Change*, contains a copy of Butcher's creative CV and performance footage from two of her works which it might be helpful for a reader to access before continuing with this chapter). There have been two major retrospectives of Butcher's work in 1986 and 1997 and a monograph of her work published in 2005. In the foreword to the monograph, Ian Bramley, former editor of *Dance Theatre Journal*, wrote:

For thirty years Butcher has produced challenging, innovative choreography that has stretched the boundaries of the dance art form, applying a rigorous artistic vision to the deployment of bodies in time and space. Butcher has maintained the integrity of this vision from her early experiences in New York's postmodern dance scene at the beginning of the 1970s to the present day through hypnotic minimalist pieces, striking cross art-form collaborations and haunting film works, continually reinventing the content and re-defining the parameters of her work. (Bramley 2005:11)

I worked with Butcher for a year as a research assistant at the Laban Centre London at the end of the 1990s during which Butcher and I co-authored writing which, with editing and additional writing by Melrose, was published in the 2005 monograph. It is indeed recommended that the reader access this published writing, reproduced in the Appendix CD-ROM (*Collection and Change*), before continuing to read the present chapter. As I remember, our process of writing was indirect compared to how I had (differently) worked with Brandstrup and Lee. In conversation, Butcher might word to me something that had taken place during a rehearsal which I had observed, or that she was then creatively preoccupied with; I might later draft such a wording into our writing. However, our conversations were only on occasion set up with the intention to reflect on her perspective on a developing project, but rather occurred in the course of my work for her as research assistant.

Butcher once commented to me that she appreciated at that time having sometimes someone such as myself present in the studio with whom she could talk and whose involvement was not that of a dancer. Whereas, for example, my writing with Rosemary Lee was situated to the expectations of her role and output as a ResCen artist-researcher, the writing I undertook with Butcher in the late 1990s evolved more gradually and less deliberately. In the projects I undertook with Lee and Brandstrup, we aimed from early in each process at a published co-authored outcome. By contrast, I am retrospectively framing my work with Butcher as a project that resulted in the co-authored chapter for her monograph. During most of my conversations with Butcher, what was privileged, it seems to me, was not an opening-out to writing but to performance. My engagement in our conversations was not interrogative but rather as an "active listener" (see Dryden, W. & Feltham, C. (1992) *Brief Counselling: A guide for beginning practitioners*. Buckingham & Philadelphia, Open University Press). Butcher was, I think, in these conversations with myself and others, often processing a recent rehearsal or planning for the next. Our conversations were practice-reflective, but from Butcher's perspective may also have been practice-productive; subsequent

writing was then a secondary, contingent production (but one which might also pragmatically be taken up into her working role as professional choreographer, for example as draft proposal for funding rather than remaining a separate reflective, “scholarly” activity).

A collection

The present chapter includes elements of a positioning meta-commentary on both the writing published in Butcher’s monograph and on a book project that is still at an early stage of development. The envisaged book is premised on studio work that Butcher is currently undertaking with dancer Eun-Hi Kim (with whom Butcher has also worked in 2005 on an unpublished DVD, *The Return*, with film-maker Martin Otter). Butcher has herself been filming Kim in the studio and plans that the work will exist visually and choreographically as a book (although it may also have a different existence as a live performance).

As she has described it to me, Butcher’s conception of a possible book grows too from her present enquiry into the ways that as choreographer she might creatively curate a collection: ‘in processes of looking back, I find how to move forward’ (Butcher in conversation, summer 2006). Citing the Atlas project of Gerhard Richter, Butcher has spoken to me of the possibility of the artist as “self-curator” creating a performatively and visually conceived archive of past work.

Looking through a lens over reality - mapping a lifetime through a flow of images that reflect and are a reflection on one artist’s experience of the world. (attributed to Gerhard Richter, in Butcher’s notebook. See <http://www.gerhard-richter.com/art/atlas.php>)

Butcher’s philosophical reflections on the curation of an archive appear to me interconnected with how she is simultaneously reflecting on how her choreography of what she terms “visual performance” is itself a curating process. Insofar as we have discussed it to date, Butcher will “collect” images of Kim, from photographs or video “grabs”. Butcher seeks from me writing that will engage not with her live process of working with Kim in the studio, but with her process of collecting, arranging and curating the images of her.

In acknowledgement that I am writing in the present thesis of a project that is in its earliest stages, the writing of this chapter is formed itself as a collection of brief observations, reflections and quotations. Reproduced here, with Butcher's permission, are firstly Butcher's initial collection of images of Kim, with which we are presently working, and secondly, phrases which I might be said to have "collected" and pieced together from our conversations (these are marked 'Collected' throughout the present chapter). A question then arises as to whether it is ethically and philosophically appropriate for me to adopt as a strategy for thetic writing the wording Butcher has given to an imperative of her evolving creative enquiry. My borrowing (a *respectful betrayal*, Massumi 2002:21) is notional for all that she has invited me to explore this possible project with her, since my engagement is that of a writing practitioner. How I "collect" in writing cannot coincide with how Butcher "collects" as choreography. If I work from her wording of practice, then, I must acknowledge that through her work:

Butcher *knows more* (as artist) *than (she can say that) she knows*, for the simplest of reasons, which is that her professional expertise is multi-dimensional, multi-modal, often multi-participant and collaborative, rather than wordable and linear. What this means is that writing, when she herself practices it, will tend to serve and to be secondary to her art, and not vice versa (as is sometimes the case for the work of arts-practitioners entering the university research context. (Melrose 2005d:175)

A sense of collection, as I grasp it, nonetheless has informed my writing of the present chapter. By borrowing from Butcher her wording of collection and curation - but not what that wording conjectures as to her 'multi-dimensional, multi-modal, often multi-participant and collaborative' signature-marked practice - I develop my own engagement with the concept. I write then for the present chapter to objectives specific to my doctoral research, but thereby *elaborate* (Spinoza 2001) a writing practice that might be worked by Butcher into a book that she envisages as a choreographic output.

“the fact of keeping it moving” (Butcher et al 2005:70)

Visually, my concern was for what I wanted to be remembered of material that flickers continuously with bursts of energy [...] Movement was phased to avoid climaxes; ‘grabbing’ had urgency [...] The main thing was pace, intricacy, sensation; keeping it going. (Butcher on the making of *Scan*, in Butcher et al 2005:70)

I watched several weeks of rehearsals for Butcher’s *Scan* (1999-2000) with dancers Jonathan Burrows, Fin Walker, Lauren Potter and Henry Montes (an experience I reflected on in the collage-form chapter I wrote with Butcher and Melrose for the Butcher 2005 monograph 2005, reproduced in Appendix CD-ROM, *Collection and Change*. See also Leigh Foster 2005).

I remember Burrows, Montes, Walker and Potter working with Butcher on how they would work their rapid, highly detailed movement in pairs, either alongside or one in front of the other. Butcher’s body state seemed of hyper-readiness, leaning slightly forwards, as if “stalking” the moments in which she would suddenly move in towards the dancers, not so as to interrupt, but so seeming to orchestrate the phasing of their movement.

‘with the attainment of knowledge [...] I come to exist differently’ (Lomax 2004:6)

Collected. Breaking down, filling again. The form is seen, then breaks.

Susan Melrose has argued, drawing upon the writings of Brian Massumi and Sonda Rosenthal, that it is vital to acknowledge that the modes of knowledge of dance-making are speculative rather than certain, until or indeed perhaps beyond the moment when they are qualitatively changed by reaching an end-point in a publicly-staged performance (unrecorded conversation, 27/1/06). Massumi’s example was that only an *ontogenetic* account (one concerned with generating being) can differentiate between an arrow in flight and an arrow that has been successfully shot; ontology will not register the qualitative change (Massumi 2002:7-8).

Pierre Bourdieu wrote in the mid-1990s of the rapidly changing situation of a racket game:

The player who hits a ball to the opposite court acts in the present in relation to a coming moment (I say coming moment rather than future) which is quasi present, which is inscribed in the very physiognomy of the present[...] She does not pose this future in a project (I can go to the right or not): she hits the ball to the left because her adversary is going to the right, because he is already, as it were, to the right. She makes up her mind in function of a quasi present inscribed in the present. (Bourdieu 1994, 1998:82)

Bourdieu's account of 'a coming moment' would appear not to be *ontogenetic* however since it deals not with change but with a moment that is 'quasi present', doubled over an "actual" present. Massumi has more recently described a doubling in the situation of a player preparing to kick a ball and who makes 'an instantaneous calculation of the positions of all the players of the field *in relation to each other* and in relation to the ball and both goals' (experienced as 'a vague perception') (Massumi 2002:74):

Since the players are in constant motion, their relation to each other, the ball, and the goals is also in flux, too complex to measure, only registerable as heightenings and releases of eddies of intensity in the midst of which appear openings for the potential movement of the ball. The player must let his trained body synthesize his separate perceptual impressions into a global sense of the intensity. (Massumi 2002:74)

The doubling that Massumi writes of 'heightenings and releases of eddies of intensity' registered is of a different order to Bourdieu's "inscribed" present, which at the level of its metaphors would seem to resist change.

Crammed with visual holes (Butcher et al 2005:70)

When I watched Butcher watching the dancers of *Scan*, was I watching her registering the 'heightenings and releases of eddies of intensity' out of which she caught 'openings for the potential movement' not of a kicked ball, but of choreographic intervention? One might conclude with Massumi that Butcher played 'the field of potential directly' (Massumi 2002:75). (If, observing in the studio, I also perceived 'eddies of intensity', they were not those that Butcher registered since Butcher's perception of potential will be synthesised in terms of her artistic "signature".)

Any and every movement of a player or the ball in that space modifies the distribution of potential movement over it. Each such modification is an event. The play is the event-dimension doubling the empirical event-space in which the substantial terms in play physically intermix. (Massumi 2002:75)

Whereas Butcher may be said to work in the 'event-dimension', I can directly only perceive the 'empirical event-space' which the 'event-dimension' of play (or performance-making) doubles. Intuitively, I may believe I glimpse something of this event dimension because I feel myself caught up in an experience which I would wish to say was marked by qualities of eddying intensity. With respect to Butcher's practice, however my experience is an illusion (a productive illusion, nonetheless, which motivates my attempt to write collaboratively with her); the intensities I perceive will not be choreographic for the reason that my engagement is not actional, is not that of a "player".

Doubled, besides

Collected. Kyoto 1 & 2. She recalls a memory of something she did; by recalling, she clings to it. (Rosemary asks Eun-Hi to work between a sense of her self now and past, or with an invisible partner. Watching her in the studio and on the camera, Rosemary sees her doubled)

A pairing of empirical and event space may find a corollary in the sequential pairing of cause and effect; both pose profound difficulties for a researcher's involvement in practitioner-focused writing. Gilles Deleuze's commented on *the illusion of final causes* as discerned by the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza:

[W]hen a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other[...] The order of causes is therefore an order of composition and decomposition of relations, which infinitely affects all of nature. But as conscious beings, we never apprehend anything but the *effects* of these compositions and decompositions: we experience *joy* when a body encounters ours and enters into composition with it, and *sadness* when, on the contrary, a body or an idea threaten our own coherence[...] Since it only takes in effects, consciousness will satisfy its ignorance by reversing the order of things, by taking effects for causes. (Deleuze 1970, 1988:19-20).

Melrose elsewhere drew upon Deleuze's argument to mark an audience's tendency to identify performance effects as causes, noting that 'spectators tend to see what has emerged when production decisions are brought to bear on, and effectively re-order, the more fragile emergent aspects of choreographic, dancerly, or visual arts invention' (Butcher and Melrose 2005:20). As rehearsal observer I was susceptible to the same misperception despite being perhaps able to witness what Melrose has described as the 'often vital impact of contingency and happy (or unhappy) accident' since I could not

readily recognize, except as effect, the ‘vital ‘expert-intuitive’ processes of the different performers or collaborators’ (Melrose’s Introduction, Butcher and Melrose 2005:20).

7th “research companion”?

Collected. She experiences in order to recall

It was Vong’s decision to project film into the space left by the dancers, introducing documentary, trace-like qualities. It makes *Scan* be not about just one thing although it picks out one person’s view. (Butcher et al 2005:70).

I might reformulate the motivation to the present research undertaking as an aspiration to write in relation to the choreographic *event-dimension*. Strikingly, the film, by Lee’s artist collaborator Turner-prize nominee Vong Phaophanit, which formed the second part of *Scan*, does I would argue briefly, as film, mark qualities of Butcher’s engagement in event-dimension. As I remember it from performance, Phaophanit’s film, which used footage he made of *Scan* in rehearsal, suggested to me a metapragmatic observation by one collaborator of another. In Phaophanit’s footage I schematically recognised a moment of the kind I described above when Butcher stepped forward rapidly out of the stillness of her watching. It seemed to me that the film offered a fragmented portrait of Butcher at work in the studio that ended with a freeze frame as Butcher turned her head, her attention caught (or distracted) by the camera lens. Projected many weeks later onto the floor of the performance space, the image of Butcher looked out to the audience in the performance moment that she was then working towards and envisaging in rehearsal. In the moment that the audience watched however, that future was over, dancers Burrows, Montes, Potter and Walker having left the performance space some minutes previously. The attention (albeit not textual) that I am suggesting Phaophanit gave to Butcher as a choreographer at work is exemplary of the focus that my research undertaking has aimed at. Phaophanit’s film works *with* rather than *of* Butcher’s practice but in a way that does ‘not interfere’, as Butcher herself commented, for all that it constituted an element of a work that appeared under her artistic direction (Butcher et al 2005:70).

The moment of the actual

Collected. Her memory is the trigger for how she associates with her own actuality.

“Intensity”, in Massumi’s writing, related to what Melrose has described as a “post-millennial” enquiry into what is *singular*. For example, Massumi described colour as singular and an absolute, as a ‘relational whole, nested within a larger, achromatic field’ (Massumi 2002:163). This whole can only be split:

at the price of becoming something other than it is (a generality). The absolute is a processual moment between emergence and dismantling extraction[...] It is the very moment of the actual: its unsplitness. (Massumi 2002:163-4)

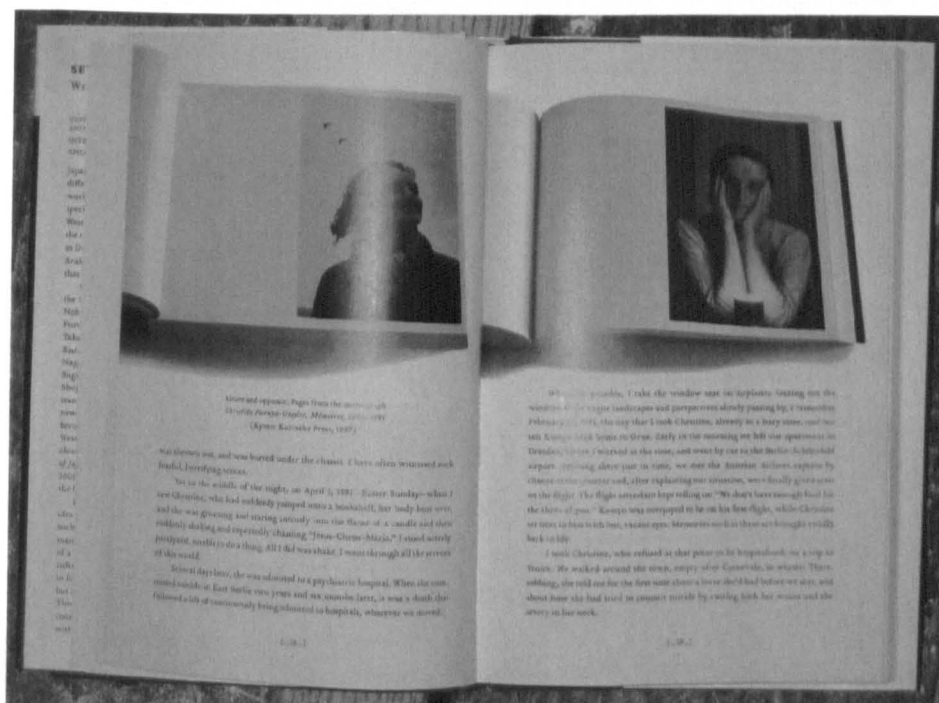
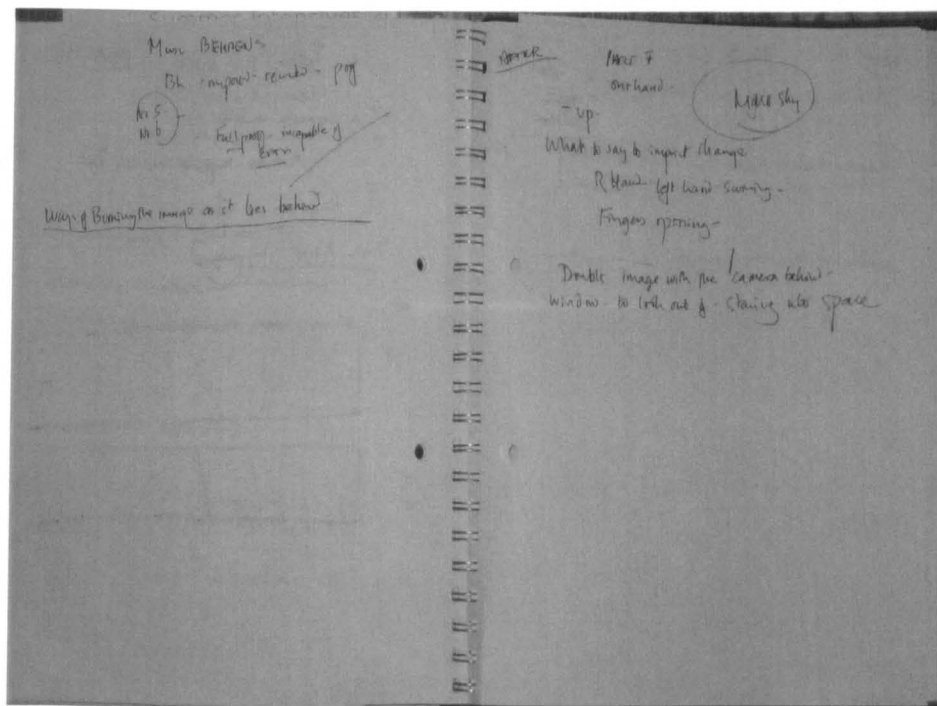
Reading Massumi’s ‘processual moment between emergence and dismantling extraction’, I hear a wording for my (writerly, rather than performance-making) sense of the elements/events that Butcher seeks to collect as she works with dancer Eun-Hi Kim.

Can one approach in writing Butcher’s process of collection? Analysis, one writerly mode, will, as Massumi described it, produce a ‘reductive dismantling of relation’ (Massumi 2002:164); synthesis will construct a ‘backdrop of generality, the summation against which the reduced elements appear as additive, or as independently combinable, dissociated from their absolutely situated appearing’ (Massumi 2002:164). Only in operations of catalysis, Massumi argued, does ‘relating takes priority over any possible separation between combinable “terms.”’ (Massumi 2002:165). Can I conceive of a catalytic writing that can relate to performance-making processes of relation?

The art of catalyzing a relational emergence is philosophy in action. The conceptual newness is there, in the event, *enacted*. Art as “composition” is enacted philosophical thought. (Massumi 2002:176)

(To which Melrose might add, of dance-making, that the philosophizing is multi-dimensional, conducted through ‘multi-schematic and multi-participant, *signed arts* practice, with qualitative transformation in mind’ (Melrose 2005d:184).)

Fig. 14 Photographs of Rosemary Butcher's project notebook and of a page from a book of photography (Vartanian, Hatanaka & Kambayashi 2006) that she has referred to in our discussions (work-in-process 2006)



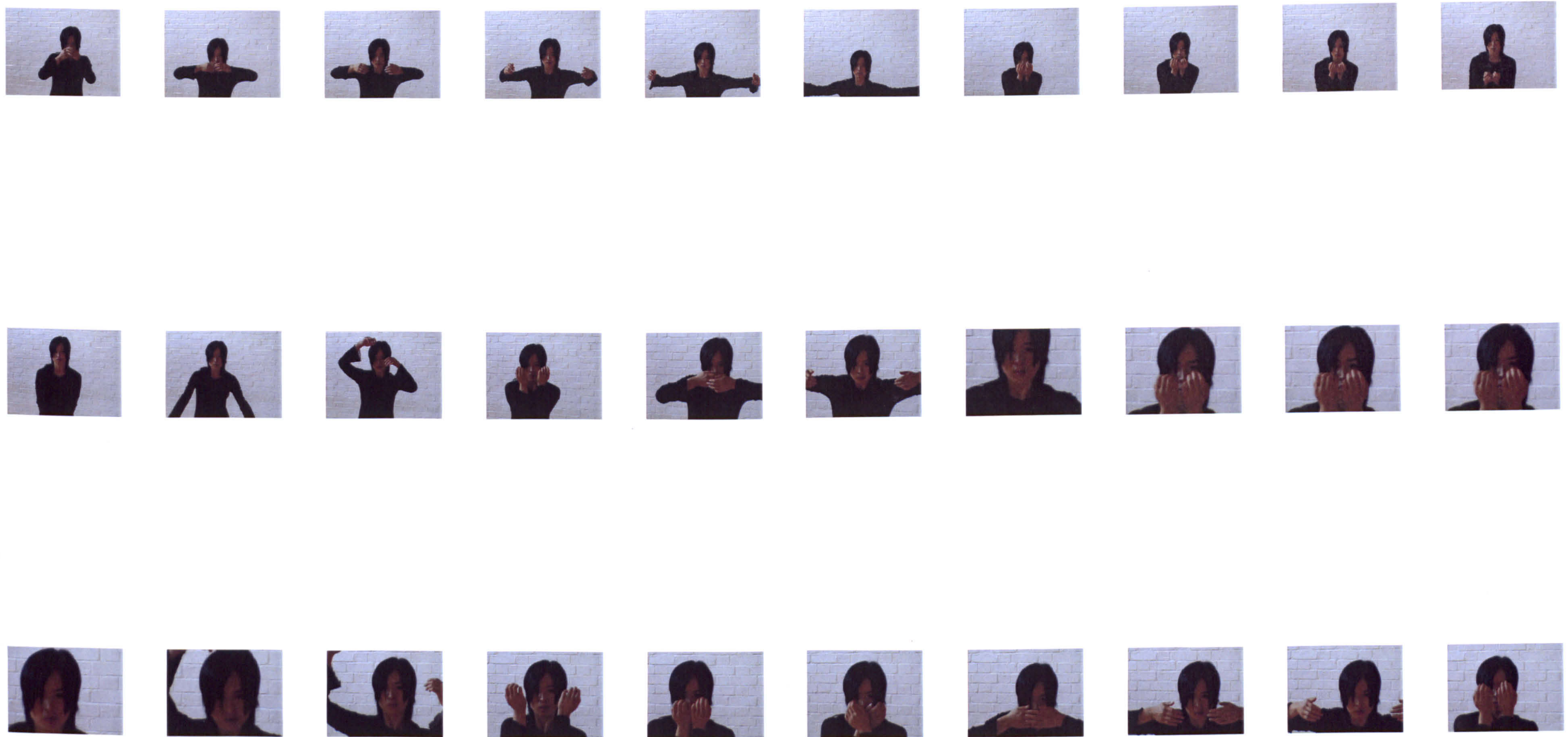


Fig. 15 Images captured from video by Rosemary Butcher of Eun-Hi Kim (work-in-process, 2006)



Fig. 16 Images captured from video by Rosemary Butcher of Eun-Hi Kim (work-in-process, 2006)

“Some-one”

Collected. Night Sky. Her movements as strewn negatives. Images cut then pieced together.

The ‘some-one’ is ‘internally and imperceptibly *riven*, or punctured, by this truth that ‘passes’ through that *known* multiple that he is. (Badiou 2002: 45-46)

Butcher spoke to me of an essay by photographer Seiichi Furuya (in Vartanian, I., Hatanaka, A., Kambayashi, Y. (eds.) (2006) *Setting Sun: writings by Japanese photographers*, London and New York, Aperture, 56-64) which included two photographs of the photographer’s wife. Butcher commented that between text and image there both was and was not for her a correspondence. The writing was not “about” the images, yet Butcher sensed a resonance nonetheless (an effect experienced on the basis of choices made by photographer, editors and designers). For example, Furuya wrote of taking window seats on aeroplanes, and his memory of his wife’s ‘lost, vacant eyes’ (59) on one flight. For Butcher, the photograph printed above this section of text, showing Furuya’s wife looking into the lens of the camera, resonated with his words about the windows of the aeroplane (and of the windows of their apartment building from which she later jumped to her death). (The photographs of the book Butcher is planning may be small, she suggests, a series of windows viewed at a distance.)

The two photographs of Furuya’s wife reproduced in his essay differently suggest her emotional state from different times in her life. From her conversations with me, it seems that Butcher is asking Kim to work with ideas of a self at different times, and between a self present and one past. Alain Badiou (in his *Ethics* cited in the previous chapter) wrote of “some-one” as ‘a multiple singularity’, ‘*this* body, and everything that it is capable of’ (Badiou 2002:44). Badiou’s conception of “some-one” might productively be cited with respect to Butcher’s wording of her enquiry since Badiou was philosophically concerned with what is new (as is an inventive choreographer). Caught up in a situation of newness, Badiou wrote that a “some-one” is:

simultaneously *himself*, nothing other than himself, a multiple singularity recognizable among all others, and *in excess of himself*, because the uncertain course [tracé aléatoire] of fidelity *passes through him*, transfixes his singular body and inscribes him, from within time, in an instant of eternity [...] belonging both to his own situation [...] and to the truth that *becomes*. (Badiou 2002: 45)

Badiou's writing then is concerned with change and singularity, as was Massumi (although again the verb is of inscription). Does Butcher ask of Kim that she be simultaneously herself and '*in excess of [her]self*'? Badiou defined the ethic of a truth as:

Do all that you can to persevere in that which exceeds your perseverance.
Persevere in the interruption. Seize in your being that which has seized and broken you. (Badiou 2002:47)

Do Butcher and Kim 'submit [their] perseverance of what is known to a duration [*durée*] peculiar to the not-known' (Badiou 2002:46-47) yet exposed 'to the permanent temptation of giving up, of returning to the mere belonging to the 'ordinary' situation, of erasing the effects of the not-known' (Badiou 2002:48)?

'The uniqueness of the example'

In Butcher's questioning of the relation between writing and photograph in the planned book, I am reminded of Derrida's writing on the first pages of *Glas* (the line break marks that the quotation came from different areas of Derrida's printed page):

Two unequal columns [...] each of which – envelop(e)s or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps [*recoupe*] the other.

Each little square is delimited, each column rises with an impassive self-sufficiency, and yet the element of contagion, the infinite circulation of general equivalence relates each sentence. (Derrida 1974, 1986:1)

Derrida is creating 'a *Writing which does what it says*' (Ulmer 1989:260): writing, for example, "of" the torn squares of a Rembrandt canvas, his words also write the squares and columns of text on the printed page, and enact what Ulmer in the late 1980s described as 'Derrida's notion of the signature (the contamination between life and art, the motivated relationship between the proper name and the work)' (Ulmer 1989:260). Does Butcher seek a relation of writing and image whereby in writing *of* a process of performance-making, that performance is created between image and writing on the page?

For example (the uniqueness of the example is destroyed by itself, immediately elaborates the power of a generalizing organ), the very moment we would claim to recapture there, in a determined text, the work of an idiom, bound to a chain of proper names and singular empirico-signifying configurations, *glas* also names classification, that is, inscription in networks of generalities interlaced to infinity. (Derrida 1990, French original 1974:149-150)

Butcher described to me how, watching Kim in a particular rehearsal, her work was to give Kim more and more worded examples that supported Kim to find what was “actual” to her. Butcher could not, she said, work with Kim to develop movement (as might more conventionally occur in a rehearsal studio); rather she needed Kim to produce an event such that Butcher could collect it, and in so doing identify it, as image. Philosophically, Butcher’s strategy, as she was describing it to me, seems to theorise what is example and what is singular, an enquiry followed in writing by theoretical writers including Derrida, Deleuze and Massumi.

Instrumentality

Collected. She is as the shutter of a camera. Why choose this moment? Her choices must be seen.

Drawing on the analysis of “the future of theory” of the expert writer Jean-Michel Rabaté, I want to trace what I have been suggesting is Butcher’s choreographic theorising of example and a “some-one”, alongside a preoccupation with signature⁶⁵ and example in theoretical writing of the last thirty years. In the course of this thesis, I have proposed that writing by a choreographer or co-writing by a choreographer and researcher requires inventive, affirmative, provisional, omniattentive and time-marked practices in relation to multi-modal, multi-dimensional, and frequently multi-participant choreographic practices (Melrose 2005d:184). Rabaté has suggested that theoretical writers have increasingly emphasised the signed, autobiographical nature of their writing practices so as to resist the instrumental take-up of their work as model in humanities departments. Rabaté observed:

one of the major pitfalls of Theory, namely the ease with which it produces standard interpretations, repetitive or dull writing[...] the more powerful a theory is, the more possibilities it will open in the name of concepts [...] which then are streamlined and mass-produced. (Rabaté 2002:98-99)

The writing practices developed and reflected on in the present research undertaking then have a knowledge-political force of challenging how accounts by choreographers are received and used in Dance Studies departments.

Fig. 17 Photographs of Rosemary Butcher's project notebook (work-in-process 2006)

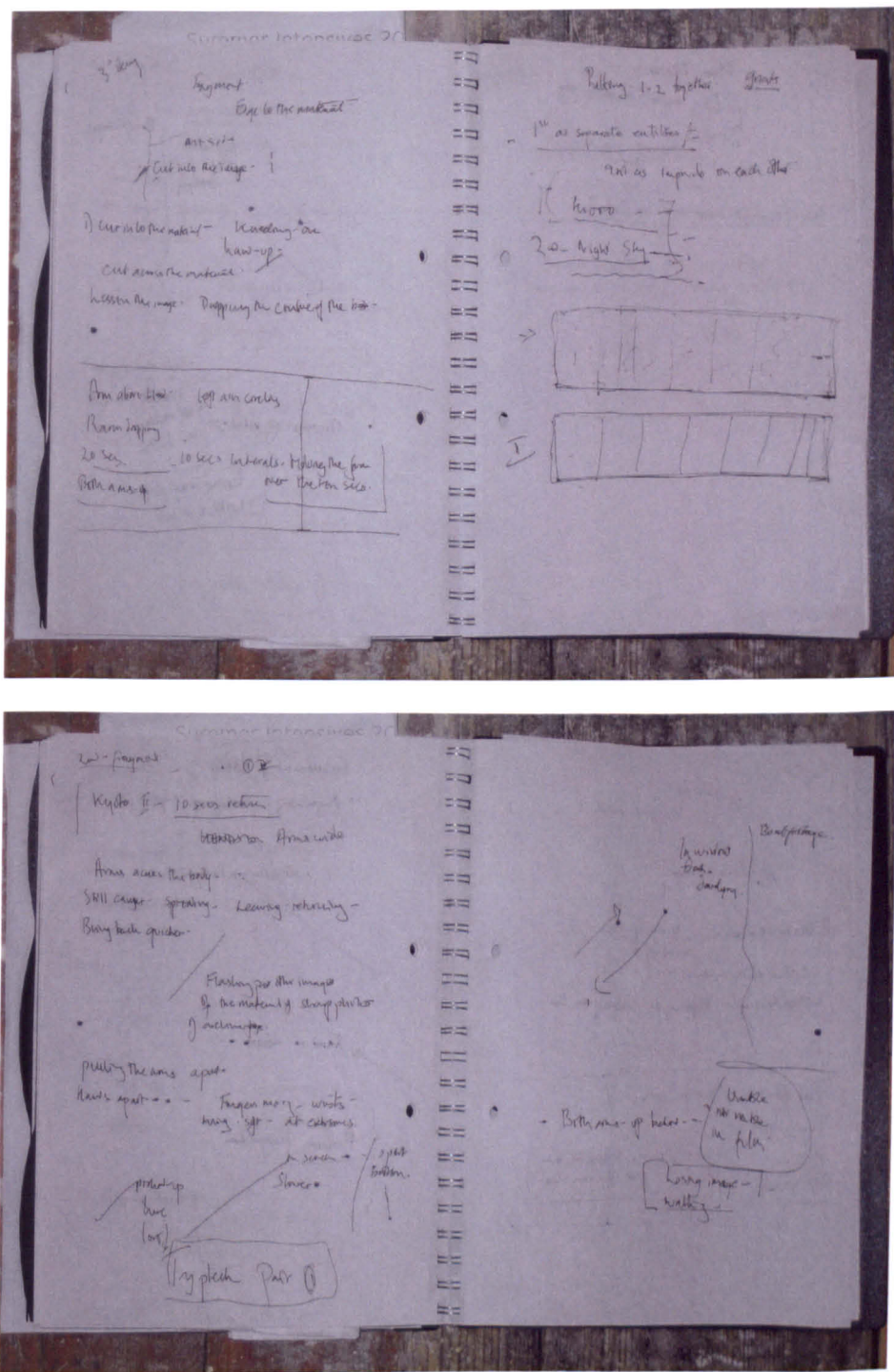


Fig. 19 Performance photographs by Vipul Sangoi of Rosemary Lee's *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2002) with dancers Henrietta Hale and Eddie Nixon



Fig. 20 Performance photographs by Vipul Sangoi of Rosemary Lee's *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2002) with dancers Henrietta Hale and Eddie Nixon



Concluding Remarks

What “Shows Up”: Writing with a Choreographer

‘What is the suchness of Heni and Eddie to you?’

The things in between the things we can describe. Not wanting to try to know. It is careful and generous. A place where many things are permitted but not always committed. (Extracts from responses written on postcards by Eddie Nixon and Henrietta Hale to a question set by Lee during studio work on ‘The Suchness of Heni and Eddie’)

[...] two meanings of *theory* [...] – first, the capture by the reflective mind of a moment of revelation in a privileged glimpse or audition, then, through the deliberate procession of these moments, the emergence of some order or process underpinned by a sense of “authority”. (Rabaté 2002:127)

Starting and ending with expert practices: processes of writing with Rosemary Lee (on Appendix CD-ROM)

This thesis began by reflecting on an instance of my writing collaboration with choreographer Rosemary Lee, and the possible implications of setting this within, or against, the context of certain traditions of writing ‘about’ expert practices, within Performance Studies and Dance Studies. Aptly, then, this final chapter will again focus on a project with Lee. In order to frame this closing example of collaborative work, I want to cite Brian Massumi, who introduced his work in the early 1990s on Deleuze and Guattari, by commenting that while his project might relay a reader to Deleuze and Guattari’s own writings, ‘the drift is as much away from the “originals” as towards them’ (Massumi 1992:8). Massumi’s phrase captures for me an understanding that might be shared by Lee, Butcher and Brandstrup: that on the one hand their collaborative writing with me might relay some readers to (or back to, in the case of readers who have been spectators) their dance-works. On the other hand, the idea of drift away suggests, as I have argued throughout this thesis, that each collaborative writing has its own epistemic trajectories, related to, but non-identical with, that of a performed work with which it concerns itself.

The “drift” was unusual in this final project of writing with a choreographer considered in the present thesis. Lee had invited me to work with her as a writer-observer on a research project in autumn 2002 that issued from her role as a ResCen artist-researcher entitled *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie*. The project was initially conceived as a week-long project of studio enquiry into Lee’s creative processes in which I was to support Lee’s process of metapragmatic reflection from my position as observer. It culminated in a performance-presentation at a conference event that aimed to show to an audience something of how a creative process might begin for Lee. At this juncture, the reader is advised to access the Appendix CD-ROM (*Concluding Remarks*) to view photographs from the presentation and the postcards that were a part of the presentation, along with an unpublished interview I made with Lee in which she reflects on the *Suchness* project.

For the *Suchness* project, Lee had deliberately limited the decisions she made prior to entering the studio aside from casting two dancers, Eddie Nixon and Henrietta Hale, who had previously danced together for her in *Passage* (2001) and determining as her aim to be concerned with her sense of them in a duet relationship. Lee later described to me how she wanted to ‘reveal what was happening for me choreographically as I started a creative process from what felt like nowhere – other than in this conviction that whatever was created be about how I saw these two dancers dancing together’ (unpublished interview, Lee and Pollard, 2004).

During the presentation, Nixon and Hale danced in response to a series of tasks and images they had explored during the research week. At intervals, Lee spoke directly to the audience commenting, for example, on her intentions for the project, the dilemmas she had experienced or what she was noticing in Hale and Nixon’s present dancing. Both Lee and I also read aloud from postcards written variously by Hale and Nixon and by us, in response to questions given by Lee that encouraged us to reflect on what had been taking place in the studio. Three years later, Lee returned to the research process and presentation and created with Nixon and Hale a metapragmatic dance-presentation⁶⁶. Lee’s publicity announced a ‘hybrid performance/lecture-dem’ in which the ‘audience witness the dancers’ mental and physical challenges whilst they simultaneously hear the struggles and discoveries of the choreographer. An intimate duet gradually unfolds’ (from a publicity email sent by Rosemary Lee, 4/12/05).

Suchness is a translated term that Lee had idiosyncratically adopted from Buddhist practice. As I understand it, she used the term to name metaphorically the perceptual schemata by which choreographically she both saw and envisaged a relationship in dance of Nixon and Hale; the experiences she identified as their *suchness* then marked a distinctive and anticipatory sense of how she might figure them choreographically. In an unpublished interview with me, Lee described her ‘interest in what I am seeing in a dancer, that is, an essence and potential which I want to draw out of their dancing. By this, I do not mean any impossible idealization of who they “really are”, but rather that I am focused on who they are to *my* eyes as they dance’ (2004).

Using a metalanguage of perception, Lee might be said to experience the “suchness” of the two dancers as a percept. However, in conversation she has also described how she believed her percept to be simultaneously an artefact of her personal-professional, developed patterns of curiosity and judgment. Several times, for example, Lee referred to a dilemma which turned, I believe, on the peculiarity of suchness as both percept and artifact. (My characterization of Lee’s interest in “suchness” might be modulated by Rosenthal’s argument that ‘the difference between concepts and percepts represents two ends of a continuum rather than an absolute difference in kind.’ Rosenthal 1986:24)

Am I doing what I said I’d do? Surely the structures I give them limit their ‘suchness’ but then how do I glean their suchness without a structure?

Am I hypocrite? I am using old forms, old themes – can this still be about Eddie and Heni’s suchness – I feel a fraud

(Written on a postcard handed amongst the audience during presentation, Lee 2002)

Lee was questioning, it seems, her conviction that what she saw as the ‘suchness’ of Nixon and Hale could be an intrinsic, *singular* quality of their duet since in trying to bring forward those qualities to an audience she used, as she put it, ‘old forms, old themes’; choreographic approaches that she might and does use with other dancers in other projects. She could register her sense of Nixon and Hale as “suchness”, then, because it was mediated by her existing personal-professional skills in attending to individual qualities of dancers.

Her dilemmas continued: ‘My greatest love is to watch them in the process of grappling with a task, in the moment of that engagement – how can I find the context to reveal that to an audience?’ (postcard cited above, Lee 2002). This further dilemma concerned then how she might persuade an audience to forego its spectating knowledge-perspective and instead *intuit* her engaged sensibility as watcher so as to share what in informal registers she described as ‘her greatest love’ in moments in the studio in which Nixon and Hale were absorbed by an improvisation task at hand. On one of the process postcards, I described seeing Lee in such a moment of watching a dancer’s engagement but my observation suggests that the affect, for Lee, may involve more than the pleasure that she named to me in interview.

On Tuesday, I see Rosemary still into a watching. She is fascinated by Heni who is preparing for rehearsal with yoga. What is Rosemary’s intent? Not curiosity, not enjoyment. Her absorption, reverie are almost ruthless.

(Lee 2002, Postcard written during the research week and passed amongst audience during presentation)

Hale and Nixon described on the postcards how as watchers themselves they on occasion observed one another’s absorption in a task and how as dancers they experienced that absorption in improvising together. For example:

Nixon: We both had our eyes closed and were sitting on two chairs side by side. We weren’t touching and the only sensory information was the odd sound. Yet I knew what to do and where to go to find the spaces around Heni without touching. I could feel circles around her to push through.

Nixon of watching Hale: I saw something pouring, eddying through the air [...] I saw the tracks you left, and your face lifted [...] Whatever was in the air was inside you, like Dust in Phillip Pullman’s *Northern Lights*.

Hale: We both slowed down and it was coming to an end. I was leading but it didn’t matter anymore because I knew I couldn’t do anything that wasn’t connected to Eddie. I don’t know what he was doing but I knew that his attention was my attention. (Lee 2002, extracts from postcards written during the research week and passed amongst audience during presentation)

Reflecting now on the project, I might propose to Lee that her dilemma of percept-artefact could be reconfigured if her research workshops might be understood as *technologies* in the phenomenological sense given in Heidegger’s 1977 essay, ‘The question concerning technology’ (In Lovitt, E. (ed. and trans.) (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, New York, Harper and Row). Lucas Introna, scholar of technology, ethics and organization, drew upon Heidegger’s

account when he surveyed phenomenological approaches to information technology and ethics:

Once in place technology allows the world to ‘show up’ in particular ways (Introna and Ilharco 2003). For example you are a different person to me with a mobile phone than without one. With a mobile you become disclosed, or show up, as ‘contactable’, ‘within reach’ as it were. (Introna 2005)

Heidegger’s argument, as Introna saw it, was that technology could not adequately be understood in terms of producing tools that determine how one does things; technological invention rather involves a technological “attitude”, a particular way of looking and relating to the world. If Lee’s workshops can be identified in terms of dance-making technologies, her choreographic (*technological*) disposition in rehearsal will allow ‘the world’ (an intersubjective, multi-modal field of dance-making composed in relation to Nixon and Hale) to ‘show up’ in *particular* ways (particular because the technology is governed by the individuality of Lee’s professional practice). Certain qualities of Nixon and Hale’s duet relation then may be disclosed to Lee as dance-making potential specific to her choreographic signature.

The recurrences Lee observed of ‘old forms, old themes’ then may be understood as features of a nonetheless individuated technology; the ‘suchness’ of the dancers and their dancing, like the mobile phone carrier who becomes ‘contactable’, would not have been disclosed without Lee’s signature-marked creative “technology”. To extend the analogy, I might configure my observing role as a technology for a choreographer who is engaged, as Lee was here, in metapractice. The efficacy of my observations, insofar as the collaborations of the present research were concerned, depended upon whether they would “show up” to the choreographer. Those that did not *were laid aside*, on the basis of the realisation that they did not “fit” with the expert practitioner sense of expert practices in question, regardless of their earlier apparent interest to the researcher. As a technology of metapractice, then, my writing collaborations with choreographers might claim to be practitioner-authorised, as well as practitioner-focused.

‘Wasp and orchid, as heterogenous elements, form a rhizome’

Reflecting on Lee’s practice with Hale and Nixon as I had observed it during workshops for *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie*, I realized that I was more and more struck by the interconnections of Lee’s practice. I had had a similar intuition whilst working with Lee on the *Passage* website (Lee and Pollard 2004:74) however the implications of my observation now seemed different. When I commented on these observed interconnections to Lee, she would appear frequently intrigued but might on occasion express anxiety as if my observations of the enmeshment of her practice made her doubt its professional validity, hence becoming a source of anxiety or dissatisfaction to her. In a not atypical practitioner self-deprecation as practitioner, Lee might seem to believe, for example, that the interconnections meant she was inadvertently working in the same way over again, whereas I was intrigued, rather, by the ways each interconnection has modulated my perception of the complexity of her practice.

What I am sensing might phenomenologically be described as:

[A]n overabundance of relationships, an indefinitely rich relational field from which perceptual experience must select and, in the process of selecting, organize[...] “What is there” is grasped only as it emerges from the transactional matrix of anteceptive experience via the structures of pragmatic meaning. (Rosenthal 1986:76-77)

In writing I have synoptically identified one relationship at a time, but must acknowledge that the interconnections are ‘indefinitely rich’. In *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie*, for example, I observed to Lee that her dilemma as to the extent she should structure the performance presentation seemed to parallel how she perceived Hale and Nixon’s individual dancing qualities on a spectrum of bounded limbs (“structured”) and an open, flung expansion (“unstructured”). In the moment by moment work of composing a duet, I observed too that Lee might offset a section of close entangled, interlocking movement with material that took Hale and Nixon out into the space of the studio. On a postcard, one of the dancers responded to Lee’s question, ‘what is the suchness of Heni and Eddie to you?’ with ‘[i]t is often touching, holding, gripping, tangling[...] it likes to get stuck in difficult contortions [...] and then break free and bound around’ (Lee 2002, revised 2005-6).

It occurred to me that there might be a further interconnection between these decisions as to movement quality and a dilemma Lee had described between needing to wait in the studio so as to give the dancers the freedom to discover an idea (“unstructured”) and fear of being “fraudulent” in the role of choreographer because she is not “setting” material, that is, not binding movement material created by the dancers into a dance composition (“structured”) (Lee’s *Writings for ResCen*, www.rescen.net).

In reflecting on the enmeshment I observed in Lee’s practice, I found it illuminating and productive to read Deleuze and Guattari’s celebrated 1980 description of de/reterritorialization and the rhizome in a critique of “arboreal thought”, cited below⁶⁷. It seemed that my perception of an overlap or interconnection between elements at different layers of Lee’s dance-making process might metaphorically be conceptualized in terms of successive deterritorializations and reterritorializations. The enmeshment that Lee acknowledged might then be understood, by analogy with a “rhizome” as Deleuze and Guattari described it. The elements referred to here – the dancerly qualities of Hale and Nixon, a question of structuring, and a shift between entangled and expansive duet movements and sensed relation - are heterogenous, concerned with different levels and modes of a dance-making process, but can be viewed as enmeshed from a metapragmatic perspective.

How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogenous elements, form a rhizome[...] Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 French original, 1999:7)

I would add that the relations of dance-making and writing across the series of process-reflective projects on which Lee and I have worked together might also be modeled as heterogenous elements which form a rhizome. This modeling is productive in terms of the present research undertaking since, if I have theorized that, and in what ways, my engagement as observer might be affirmative to a choreographer, the movements of de/reterritorialization prompt me to acknowledge that my research process was also

affirmed and strengthened by Lee's engagement and complicity, and could not, in fact, have existed without these. What emerges therefore is a reciprocated account of choreographer and researcher's engagement which perhaps approaches *practical reasoning* as outlined by Bohman (2005). Lee has described how my observations and questions worked qualitatively to modulate her understanding of her creative practice (Lee and Pollard 2004). In *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* my contribution as a researcher was transformed by being folded back into the creative processes that I sought to observe, "reterritorializing" as a metapragmatic element in an event that sought to (not)perform Lee's epistemic preoccupation with the qualities of dance-making in a studio.

Final remarks in place of a conclusion

This thesis has aimed, following its early 'positionings', to expand perspectives rather than to narrow them, and it is on this sort of basis that I prefer, here, to avoid that sort of conclusion that refocuses, narrows, self-interrogates, re-iterates, and proceeds then to practice closure. The present writing has practised, throughout, what might be termed 'interspersed': a series of writings has been prompted by other writings that I adopted as "research companions" to the present enquiry. As I noted previously, the term "research companion" was the phrase that live artists Gregg Whelan and Gary Winters of Lone Twin gave to a short publication, *of Pigs and Lovers*, which gathered writing and images generated during their research project *The Days of the Sledge Hammer Have Gone* begun in 1999. Lone Twin introduced their "research companion" remarking that they organized the material of the book 'in an effort to continue the work through into new performance inquiries'. In certain respects then the *writing performance-making* that this thesis has explored might become, or already is, a "research companion" for the work of a choreographer such as Lee: working with and organizing the reflections and observations made by herself, myself and dancers Hale and Nixon in her role as ResCen artist-researcher, the possibility of a meta-choreographic duet, which *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* became, began to crystallize for her. In this sense, then, the present writing project is both modest, on its own behalf, and necessarily incomplete: what completes it, momentarily, is its eventual unfolding in a different context, in which it similarly might serve as 'companion to'.

On that sort of basis, practice-focused writing by or with a choreographer might be measured as effective, by that (or another) choreographer, to the extent that in producing it she can *elaborate* a creative enquiry of her own, which she pursues elsewhere *as choreography*, as well as a writing-based enquiry. The writing *as work* should seek, on this sort of basis, in its own ethical undertaking, to “give something back” to the choreographic practitioner, “about *her* work”, but viewed from the companion position: outside of, as well as empathetically *immersed in* (a position that, of necessity, requires ongoing and attentive negotiation between practitioners of writing and dance). To attempt to set this negotiation in motion, and pursue it through to one effective outcome (writing *practise/d*), the choreographer must contract-in to the negotiation; and on that basis, alone, can the writing-practitioner undertake to listen carefully to the choreographer, while watching her (at) work, systematically assuming a position secondary to her or his own. At best, this would mean the practice of a writing produced as a gift⁶⁸ to the choreographic practitioner. It would be a mistake, on the other hand, to conceive of writing as secondary production *for a choreographer* in the sense of a process that takes place “after” choreography. With both the new project of writing with Butcher and with Lee’s *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie*, performance-making has succeeded the times of writing, and I should want to claim, in however restricted a way, that the latter has contributed to the former.

My overall research project might seem to attract the criticism that it serves a university agenda of scholarly interest in performance-making (I note Simon Jones’ observations, earlier in this dissertation, on the need to flee writing; on the other hand, he himself has made those observations, in turn, in published ‘academic’ writing – signalling the dilemma that continues to face and challenge us). The present thesis may however indicate that a university agenda of scholarly interest in arts practice will only successfully be pursued if it also engages arts practitioners creatively, empathetically, and along the lines of their own particular interest, acknowledging, in so doing, the primacy of the arts practices concerned, and the secondary role of writing. Following Melrose (2005c and elsewhere), the present thesis has reflected on the considerable difficulties facing the writer’s endeavour to produce writing in relation to performance-making that resists the spectator’s quite particular orientation to knowledge. I have enquired into what might constitute a ‘worked’ interface, located between performance-making practices by (named) expert, professional artists, and the writing practices produced, at that site - and in looking back at it - by and with a

researcher-writer. The notion of relationality – between two or more practitioners – and difference – between, for example, a performance-making practitioner and a writing practitioner, operating in each instance to the criteria that apply to and regulate decisions made in these different modes of practice – has been central to the current enquiry. It is clear, in relational terms, that whatever the nature of the ‘contract’ established or negotiated between the writing practitioner and the choreographic practitioner, academic writing emerges as dominant in the academic context, whereas it is as clear that in arts-professional contexts of production, the signature of the choreographic artist holds its place. The present dissertation has sought to explore the relatively recent emergence of what has been called ‘performance writing’, *by undertaking it*. In this sense, writing in a range of registers (including apparently conventional thetic registers), should itself be viewed as a research practice /practice as research, but so, too, are the different modes and registers of practice represented in the accompanying appendix CD-Rom.

The present research undertaking has attempted to explore some of the philosophical implications of asking a choreographer for an account of how she or he works, in addition to the evidence of how she works that the workshop and the eventual production provide. I have argued, drawing on certain insights available from the growing body of “practice theoretical” writing (T. Schatzki et al, 1996) and anthropological models, for a mode of collaborative writing between choreographer and researcher-observer, where the latter consistently negotiates what must remain a secondary position in the undertaking; yet I also acknowledge that writing can seem, in its economy and ubiquity, and in the display of authority in which academic writing participates, to *stand in for* a practice that it claims to re-present. Approaches to the ambiguities of observation have been informed by the possibility raised in recent publications of critical anthropology of producing what is variously termed auto-, ‘native’ or insider-ethnography. This thesis has considered, in addition, the extent to which the modes of studio observation I have practised might have been unwittingly informed by models of fieldwork equally practised in an anthropological tradition that readily, despite its best intentions, ‘others’ its objects of analysis. On this basis certain aspects of the present research undertaking might be said to perform an “ethnographic turn” despite itself (H. Foster, 1996, and elsewhere), regardless of my attempts to abstain from description linked to complex explanations and interpretations.

Developed through projects of co-authored writing with choreographers Brandstrup, Butcher and Lee, the objectives of this research undertaking have concerned the attempt to practise modes of writing that might ‘interface’ relatively unintrusively with performance-making. In these projects, the three choreographers differently attempted to word elements of their ongoing choreographic enquiries. The aspiration driving the undertaking was that such writing might participate in a choreographer’s current choreographic research, rather than document research that had already unfolded in the creation of a performance work; but it is clear, in the case study elements included in the main body of the present work, that this aspiration is a difficult one to sustain where practitioners’ ways of working and times of working differ. In the dissertation, I observed frequent instances in which my own attempted collaborative practice of writing with choreographers was forgetful of the difficulties of such an endeavour.

Attempts on these sorts of bases to model collaborative research practices – such as one might find in research-methodological meta-practices – do remain inconclusive. Readers will be aware of Deleuze and Guattari’s account of the *rhizome* as a means to model movements of *de/reterritorialization*. At the time of writing, they suggested the rhizome (in place of the generative tree model), as a means to contest established but inadequate models of enquiry in the context of ongoing creative change – such as applies to both dance-making and performance writing. I have proposed, in the course of the present work, that projects of writing between a choreographer and researcher-observer might be modelled *rhizomically*: in both published writing by practitioners, and in my own projects of co-authorship with a choreographer, I have sought to identify and exemplify the possibility of writing in provisional, speculative, active, time-specific and omni-attentive modes with respect to the times, persons and places of performance-making, while also reflecting productively on these modes.

Throughout the present research undertaking, I have marked the constitutive epistemic difficulties facing an artist who seeks to reflect and write concerning their perspective, experience and knowledge of performance-making, and in so doing I have also observed my own – possibly inevitably - compromised role as researcher seeking to work with artists in such a project. Plainly at certain key moments, both parties have recognised that this project is my own, while its terms and conditions are those of the university itself, and not those of the arts practitioner. This remains the project’s shortcoming: it may well go unread by the artists themselves. At the same time,

however, I have suggested that as a researcher I might develop a writing-productive, “virtual” attunement with artists in a situation of performance-making, while recognising that this could be to disregard the “real” difficulties of evolving creative practice-focused writing. Interrogating relations between writing practices and modes of production, and choreographers’ processes of creation, the overall research premise has thus concerned the development of writing capable both of articulating what *matters* to choreographers and the possibility that it might, eventually, cause a dance scholar to hesitate before writing *on* or *about* dance-making. The latter might seem a meagre objective, but it is a real one. The possibility for further research arises from the present project: a research writing, produced by or with a creative practitioner, that understands writing itself as no more and no less than a secondary unfolding, of a choreographer’s epistemic engagement that, in the first instance, will have unfolded as a process of dance-making.

Endnotes

¹ Note on terminology. Reference to 'practice' in the present thesis usually marks a concern with a professional's engagement in that activity, be it writing-production or performance-production. 'Practice' is not here conceived of within the formulation 'theory and practice' that has been widely critiqued by Susan Melrose (sfmelrose.u-net.com) – that is, as an *other* of the writing identified conventionally as 'theoretical'. Instead, the production of writing is identified as one possible mode of practice within a 'mixed-modal' agenda. That practice, in some instances at least, might be identified, in turn, as 'inventive' or 'creative' – whether it is 'signed' by Gilles Deleuze or by Brian Maasumi, or by Gregory Ulmer. The production of choreographic work, to the criteria which operate in professional arts-making, might well, as Melrose has argued, by the same token, be identified as 'theoretical', as well as 'inventive' and 'expert', to the extent that it practises an ongoing (meta-praxiological) enquiry, often 'aesthetic' in nature, into its own operations, which themselves reflect creatively upon the discipline or disciplines involved. As will be seen, Knorr Cetina has shown, of such practices, that these stand then as "momentary instantiation[s]" of a research activity which equally enquires into the models of intelligibility that apply to work in the discipline/s concerned (Knorr Cetina 2001).

Reference is also made in the course of the thesis to 'performance-makers' and 'performance practitioners' and, more restrictively, in discipline-specific terms, to 'dance-makers', 'dance practitioners' and 'choreographers'. The terms 'practitioner' or 'maker' may be preferred, in political terms, over an ordering of 'director'/'choreographer' to 'actors'/'dancers', in descriptions of contemporary performance practices that emphasise collaborative, devised processes. (In the case of dance performance in Britain, such a shift in ordering begins with the 'new dance' movement of the 1960s onwards that is now known as 'independent dance'. See for example Mackrell 1992, Claid 2006). Emilyn Claid has referred to work that 'has been devised, and is therefore owned, by the performers', notwithstanding that it has a choreographer (Claid 2006:11). She has noted, too, that 'the role of performer-choreographers [...] is endemic to the British independent dance scene' (Claid 2006:10). I acknowledge the fact, here, that some 'choreographers' might resist being described as 'dance-makers', 'dance-practitioners' or 'dance-artists', if it is the case that they see what they make as falling outside existing genres of dance performance and/or if they do not (or no longer) have a role as 'performer-choreographer'.

'Performance' is used, in the present thesis, to describe a public presentation of work (it thereby enters into the wider economy of production, within which judgement is exercised upon it), which might be variously discursively positioned as, for example, 'theatrical', 'devised', 'movement-based', 'visual', 'live' or 'choreographed' work. I acknowledge the restrictiveness of this usage, in comparison with its theorisation in arts fields and elsewhere (cf McKenzie 2001). For example, the entry for 'Performance Studies' in 'A Dictionary of Re-Received Ideas' in *Performance Research* was: 'Pause, grin and admit that it's true that anything might be considered performance, then continue' (Jessica Chalmers in Allen et al 2006:132). The entry for 'Performing', in turn, was: 'an act of everyday life' (Hiroko Kikuchi in Allen et al 2006:132).

² For example, PARIP (Practice as Research in Performance) was founded in 2000 at Bristol University to 'investigate creative-academic issues raised by practice as research' in performance (www.bris.ac.uk/parip). ResCen (Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts) was founded in 1999 at Middlesex University to work with professional artists and others 'to further the understanding of how artists research and develop new processes and forms' (www.rescen.net). In 2004, the Centre for Practice as Research in the Arts was inaugurated at University College Chester (www.chester.ac.uk/cpra).

³ A list is being compiled by PARIP, www.bris.ac.uk/parip. Also available on the PARIP site is a report by Robin Nelson and Stuart Andrews on 'Regulations and protocols governing 'Practice as Research' (PaR) in the performing arts in the UK leading to the award of PhD'.

⁴ Recent "practice as research" conferences, symposia and projects have included: University of Hertfordshire (2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) Research into Practice conferences; University of Bristol, Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP (2001, 2003, 2005) conferences and symposia; University of Middlesex, Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts (ResCen) (2002) 'Nightwalking' conference event; University of Northumbria (2002) 'Connecting Research with Practice'; University of Surrey Roehampton (2003) 'New alignments and emergent forms'; University of Middlesex (2003) 'Virtuosity and Performance Mastery'; University of Wales, Aberystwyth (2005) 'The Articulate Practitioner - Articulating Practice'; University of Melbourne, Australia (ongoing) 'Unspoken', Research into choreographic practice; 'Choreography and Cognition' (2003-2004), a joint research project initiated by arts researcher Scott deLahunta and choreographer Wayne McGregor, significant to the present study by how it involved researchers as studio observations during McGregor's rehearsals (www.choreocog.net/)

⁵ The Arts and Humanities Research Council (www.ahrc.ac.uk) has since 1999 awarded Creative Fellowships to, amongst others in the fields of performance and dance: Bobby Baker, Sarah Rubidge, Carol Brown, Aaron Williamson, Sophia Lycouris, Rosemary Butcher, Emily Claid, Kim Brandstrup, Fiona Templeton, Rona Lee, Tim Etchells and Frances Barbe.

⁶ We return to the ways this term might be understood at a number of different points in the thesis overall, making the point, at this stage, that developing practices will differently define, or differently emphasise, different aspects of it.

⁷ Shannon Jackson found stalls in an interaction of postmodern artist and postmodern critic (Jackson 2004:113). "Symbiosis" was the more optimistic term used by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004:46).

⁸ As called for by Melrose (2002d, 2003b). It may be observed that the Research Assessment Exercise, a national assessment for funding purposes of the research in UK universities will attend to the quality and excellence of an output but 'will neither advantage nor disadvantage any type of research or form of output, whether it be physical or virtual, textual or non-textual, visual or sonic, static or dynamic, digital or analogue.'

<http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2006/01/docs/o65.pdf> Accessed 27/6/06

⁹ Dance scholar Anna Pakes cited Hintikka's observations that a series of writers including Bacon, Hobbes and Vico have been concerned with the distinctiveness of a maker's knowledge as involving practical and theoretical understanding (Pakes 2003:143).

¹⁰ www.sfmelrose.u-net.com

¹¹ Jonathan Burrows, for example, commented in interview that 'The process isn't finished at the first performance. I have realised recently that so long as we're performing a piece, the process that you start when you first sit down with a piece of paper and write down your first idea continues, it never stops' (Burrows in conversation with Matteo Fargion, 1998).

¹² It is important to note, however, that Heidegger's concern was not with creative practice, but instead with routine and everyday practices.

¹³ Aptly too, *Performance Research* published two of the papers which the present thesis will be concerned as "research companions": Burrows and Ritsema (2003) and Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski (2002).

¹⁴ From Editorial Statement, *Performance Research* 10 (4) December 2005

¹⁵ Christopher Heighes and Ewan Forster's website can be found at www.forster-heighes.org.uk

¹⁶ A term used by Michel de Certeau (1984) and taken up by Susan Melrose (2005a, 2005c)

¹⁷ Clare MacDonald wrote further, 'I have to admit that the concept of prepared pages remains problematic. While we know (in theory) what we are doing, readers have made of it what they would' (MacDonald 1999:62).

¹⁸ As called for by Melrose (2002d, 2003b). It may be observed that the Research Assessment Exercise, a national assessment for funding purposes of the research in UK universities will attend to the quality and excellence of an output but 'will neither advantage nor disadvantage any type of research or form of output, whether it be physical or virtual, textual or non-textual, visual or sonic, static or dynamic, digital or analogue.'

<http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2006/01/docs/o65.pdf> Accessed 27/6/06

¹⁹ One might compare the situation to response given by Wade Mahon, literary editor, when questioned about the readership of the journal *Issues in Writing* responded: 'We're ideally trying to target both academic readers and professional writers - people who are outside of academia and would like to explore the same or similar issues as academics. We ideally want to be a bridge between academia and professional writing circles, but to be honest, I think most of our readers are academics.'

²⁰ My observation of highly experienced choreographers at work is also informed by my own intermittent, semi-professional skills and experience as a dancer.

²¹ For readers unfamiliar with Lee's work, here are brief biographical details taken from the ResCen website, www.rescen.net (see Lee's choreochronicle reproduced with permission in the accompanying CD-ROM: 'Rosemary Lee has been choreographing, performing and directing for twenty years. Her work is characterized by a desire to work in a variety of contexts, constituencies and media. Her creative output is diverse: large scale site specific work with community casts numbering up to 250; solos for herself and other performers; films for broadcast television, site specific installations and commissioned works for dance companies in theatre settings. Her work often involves extensive collaboration with other artists from a variety of disciplines. She guest teaches and lectures internationally and has recently been a recipient of a two year fellowship from Arts Council England.'

²² Brian Massumi proposed an "exemplary" method with reference to the writing of Agamben, G. (1993) *The Coming Community*. Hardt, M. (Trans.) Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 9-10. Massumi wrote: 'An example is neither general (as is a system of concepts) nor particular (as is the material to which a system is applied). It is "singular"' (Massumi 2002:19-20).

²³ I acknowledge Hal Foster's commentary in the 1990s that 'some artists abandoned critical practices, others adopted theoretical positions as if they were readymade critiques, and some theorists embraced artistic postures just as naively. If the artists hoped to be elevated by theory, the theorists looked to be grounded in art; but often these two projections advanced two misconceptions: that art is not theoretical, not productive of critical concepts, in its own right; and that theory is only supplemental, to be applied or not as one sees fit' (Foster 1996:xvi).

²⁴ I am taking up Melrose's observation in "Untitled 1", in Rugg, J. (ed), *Issues in Curating, Contemporary Art and Performance*, Intellect Books, forthcoming 2007, that signature can be understood in terms of the singular mark (of intellectual property ownership) that can only be replicated by another writer or choreographer by her committing fraud, whereas style, with which others have associated signature, can be freely imitated.

²⁵ "Action research" is associated with the 1940s work of Kurt Lewin which was subsequently widely criticized but then regained prominence during the 1980s, particularly in collaborative community and classroom research (Smith 1996, Scholl 2002). Social science methodologies of practitioner-based research have inflected the present research. However, such projects aim at conclusions generalisable to other "cases" whereas my research is concerned with artist creative practices as singular (Lincoln & Guba 1985, Lindlof 1995, Erlandson et al 1993).

²⁶ Halliday's characterization of writing problematises methods of "reflective practice" and "thought-in-action" which in their modes of writing tend not to acknowledge the speculative nature of the enquiry.

²⁷ Melrose, in an email to the author, July 2006.

²⁸ For example, I excluded the otherwise practitioner-focused writing collected in Heathfield, Adrian (ed) (2000) *Small acts: performance, the millennium and the marking of time*. London: Black Dog

²⁹ "Close reading" is a tool of "New Criticism" and "New Historicism", approaches in English Studies which informed my undergraduate studies in the mid 1990s at Cambridge University.

Shannon Jackson has observed that ‘the “particular,” the “detail,” and the “local” have appeared prominently in various forms as the methodological basis for a new cultural analytics [...A]nalysts are encouraged to see the presence of big things in small things, to make use of the humanist capacity for “close reading” and the assessment of the minute and marginal.’ (Jackson 2004:162-4, noting that a concern for detail is a historically gendered mode of attention).

³⁰ Without recognising a particular dance technique in the images of Burrows and Ritsema, I do schematically identify it as ‘dance’ from, for example, my memory of having seen Burrows dancing at other times (and of having seen Meg Stuart’s work, with whom Ritsema has danced) and from the presence of studio-typical wooden floor and white walls.

³¹ Melrose 2003b

³² Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT) is an approach to dance movement developed by Joan Skinner from the 1960s. SRT uses ‘image guided floor work and hands on tactile studies [...] to facilitate the letting go of tensions[...] an effortless way of moving and an integrated alignment of the whole self. The images Skinner uses do not describe anatomical truths, rather they express metaphorically the kinaesthetic experience of a releasing alignment which maximizes movement potential’ (Alexander 2003:20).

³³ <http://www.nyu.edu/fas/Faculty/SchechnerRichard.html>,
<http://about.tisch.nyu.edu/page/history.html> accessed 24/6/06

³⁴ Lee in unrecorded conversation with the author and in her undated piece of writing for ResCen entitled ‘The velvet stream’ webpublished at www.rescen.net.

³⁵ Following Ryle (1949), Pakes counter-argued that one may, for example, make a brilliant chess move, not by practical reasoning but by ‘sheer habit, blind impulse or in a fit of absence of mind’ (Ryle 1949:40). To then require some way of checking for and articulating a process of practical reasoning, Pakes suggested, may make it appear that the reasoning is not embedded in, but precedes, the activity. A choreographer might agree that some of his or her actions are made on whim or reflex or with their attention focused elsewhere. From my observation of particular choreographers at work and conversations with them, I would respond to Pakes’ reservation with the fact that what is produced in any single choreographic action will typically be subject to further re-working and evaluation, for example, during processes of composition or technical production. The practical reasoning embedded in a dance piece might then be argued as occurring on multiple occasions and in mixed modes.

³⁶ Under the heading, ‘the nature of Performance as Research,’ the working group are to consider ‘what field(s) of activity does ‘performance research’ describe?’ and the ‘range of performance as research activities in international higher education institutions’; the research aspect of performance activity is thereby identified within university-based frameworks. According to the notice, whilst the working group will be concerned as to ‘[w]hat knowledge(s) can performance generate’, the imperative is also to discern ‘[h]ow can the knowledge and experience of practitioners be integrated into university-based research cultures’.

³⁷ However the concerns of Judith Carroll’s ethnographically-based study into relations between an artist’s artmaking and pedagogic practices fall outside of the present research.

³⁸ Hypotheses as to intention tend to be made on the basis of the critical reader’s knowledge of Etchells’ professional mastery of creative writing (Melrose, unpublished correspondence with Pollard)

³⁹ Unpublished discussion, 2001. Melrose is drawing on M.A.K. Halliday’s systemic functional grammar, eg *Language as social semiotic*, Pinter, London, 1979.

⁴⁰ Melrose ‘propose[d] that we adopt from “practice theory” the notion that in some instances at least, performance-making processes could be identified in terms of *epistemics*, which is concerned with the construction of formal models of perceptual and other processes [...]through which knowledge and understanding are achieved and communicated.’ Susan Melrose, ePAI (2003-4) www.mdx.ac.uk/www/epai/virtuosity. The term “epistemic” is associated with Edinburgh University’s School of Epistemics, founded 1969, (and which later became a Centre for Cognitive Science) and can be defined as concerned with ‘the construction of formal models of processes – perceptual, intellectual, and linguistic – by which

knowledge and understanding are achieved and communicated' *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, Bullock, A. et al (eds.) Harper Collins, 1977.

⁴¹ I am identifying this from a thetic perspective as an epistemic aim; from a different standpoint, the underlying premise for the collaboration was that it facilitate and support writing from Lee's perspective as choreographer.

⁴² Compare the response of Eric Schroeder, scholar in writing studies and editor of the literary journal *Writing on the edge*, to the question of, when editing interviews, 'Is there ever a time when you wonder where your voice takes over, entangles with that of the interviewee?' He responded, 'That's a great question because I really *do* worry about that[...] We're constantly trimming our own lines, and with material that I get submitted from others doing interviews, I'm constantly trimming them. They're often horrified because they think they're having this brilliant conversation with somebody and this eight-line question comes back as, "What got you started as a writer?..." I'm constantly watching to make sure that somehow I'm not slipping into the other's person role either—that what they are saying is what they are saying and not something that I want them to be saying' (Lucas et al 2005).

⁴³ Shobana Jeyasingh articulated for me a practitioner's sense of process counterpointed to a spectator's sense of product when she spoke at a ResCen research seminar as follows: 'when I get into the studio, in responding to those signposts other signposts emerge. It's a process from then on really. I sometimes feel that I really don't know what the piece is about until it's finished touring [...] it has a particular quality in the studio, and then of course there's a huge change when you take that into the theatre [...] One day the dancers are very tired and I'll say "oh that's another way of doing it" [...] The chemistry between dancers changes and somehow in that whole interplay the initial signposts and the ageing process of the piece, I sometimes have a kind of glimmer of what it could be. But when I start it off, I always think of the title as a pointer towards something, rather than the thing itself' (ResCen 2004).

⁴⁴ A view now supported by cognitive psychology and neurobiology. See Thagard, Paul and Allison Barnes (1996) 'Emotional Decisions'. Republished at <http://cogprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/> that refers to Damasio, Antonio (1994) *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. New York, G.P. Putnam

⁴⁵ See for example, <http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/best-practice.php> and marketing research guidelines published at <http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/qual.htm>

⁴⁶ Kaye does not comment on the source of his disciplinary expertise as interviewer. The fact that he does not mark this omission indicates that Kaye is working to a spectator-perspective perceived norm. (Melrose 2005a).

⁴⁷ It should be noted, however, that Geertz's notion of "actor-oriented" research must be understood within a textual paradigm. 'Doing ethnography', he wrote, for example, 'is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading of") a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses[...]' Geertz 1975, 1st published 1973:9)

⁴⁸ Pratt did not in this extract question a social actor's relation to knowledge. By contrast, writing focused on dance-making must acknowledge the speculative dimension of creative practice, oriented always to a future performance.

⁴⁹ Jones' proposal alluded to Derrida's enquiry into the economies of writing and authoring in, for example, *The Post Card* (1987, French original 1980) and *Given Time* (1991, 1992). The allusion is apposite here to my present enquiry as Derrida has observed that gifts and giving also have a complex relation to time. From Derrida's writing I might therefore take a warning to be cautious about collaborative writing's attempt to give a choreographer's account. What do I give to a choreographer by writing? Into what economy do I/we give an account? 'Language gives one to think but it also steals[...]it carries off the property of our own thoughts even before we have appropriated them[...] All the difficulties of nomination or writing in the broad sense are also difficulties of *self*-naming, of *self*-writing [se nommer, s'écrire]. Everything said in language and everything written about giving-taking in general *a priori* would fold back on language and writing as giving-taking' (Derrida 1991, 1992: 80-81). If by my presence in a choreographer's studio, I to some degree *take part*, I must consider what I take away. My intention has been that my writing with artists is affirming, is *for* them and so is of some benefit to them, rather as a gift. Yet, I also take by that giving, as an exchange not

gift, since I am using my writing for a choreographer in the present research, calculating the value it will have within a doctoral economy.

⁵⁰ See W. Ong (1988, 1982), Halliday (1987:135-154) and Melrose 2002b.

⁵¹ Lomax's enquiry and practice of enquiry might be illuminated by the following comment in interview of the philosopher Alain Badiou that is included with a collection of essays on ethics: 'What any event reveals [...] is that there was something which had its own identity beyond the count, which was not taken account of. It's why I've always said that an event was, one way or another, a breakdown of the count' (Badiou in conversation with Hallward, 2002:134). Badiou's position here however is disengaged and authoritative, spoken as Lomax does not, from outside of the event conceptualised.

⁵² 'The history of metaphysical speculation, as embodied in philosophical system, is a history evincing positions that have systematically denied or rejected the sense of temporality, creativity, novelty, fallibilism, pluralism, perspectivalism, and openedness – in short, the key dimensions of speculative pragmatism – in favour of the eternal, the fixed, the final, the certain, the absolute spectator grasp, the ultimate completion, the perfected whole[...] The pervasive textures at the heart of lived experience were ignored in favour of the various second level reflective problems of spectator philosophy, and, especially since the time of Descartes, the particular problem of how a subject can bridge the gap to know an object.' (Rosenthal 1986:195-196)

⁵³ Bourdieu wrote in the mid 1990s of *habitus* as 'practical sense for what it to be done in a given situation – what is called in a sport a "feel" for the game, that is, the art of *anticipating* the future of the game which is inscribed in the present state of play.' (Bourdieu 1994, 1998:25)

⁵⁴ Performance artists Lone Twin reproduced in a research booklet a conference contribution that they gave with Canadian curator and writer Sylvie Gilbert. Each read from a list of nine points of what 'we think the work is about' (Gilbert in Lone Twin, circa 2001. Her phrase suggests however a spectating-interpretative engagement that is inappropriate to the present research undertaking.) Written independently, the lists were not compared before the presentation; in different registers, each statement points to multiple perspectives and alternate systems of thinking and reasoning which I would suggest are of the order described by Massumi 2002:181.

⁵⁵ Arts and Humanities Research Council postdoctoral fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts at Middlesex University, 2003-2006.

⁵⁶ Goat Island continue to perform to high critical acclaim in the US and England, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, Switzerland, Croatia, Germany, and Canada. On the company website, they describe their work as follows: 'Characteristically we attempt to establish a spatial relationship with audiences, other than the usual proscenium theater situation, which may suggest a concept, such as sporting arena or parade ground, or may create a setting for which there is no everyday comparison. We perform a personal vocabulary of movement, both dance-like and pedestrian, that often makes extreme physical demands on the performers, and attention demands on the audience. We incorporate historical and contemporary issues through text and movement. We create visual/spatial images to encapsulate thematic concerns. We place our performances in non-theatrical sites when possible. We research and write collaborative lectures for public events, and often subsequently publish these, either in our own artists' books, or in professional journals.' See www.goatlandperformance.org

⁵⁷ Melrose 2005b, 2005c

⁵⁸ Melrose points out that the use of the third person pronoun 'it' participates unavoidably in an objectification of what was previously in the first person: 'my work'. On the other hand, the practitioner's own use of the third person marks a stage in the making processes: it is at that moment that the work changes to Lyotard's 'the work that begins to finish the work', and it equally signals the moment of thematisation, where the performance-maker steps out of the 'my work' phases, and addresses it as other (Melrose, unrecorded conversation, August 2006).

⁵⁹ Feyerabend 1975 *Against Method*, cited by Ulmer 1989:30. Taken up by Melrose.

⁶⁰ '[T]he subject of an artistic process is not the artist (the 'genius', etc.). In fact the subject-points of art are works of art. And the artist enters into the composition of

these subjects (the works are 'his'), without our being able in any sense to reduce them to 'him' (and besides, which 'him' would this be?). (Badiou 2002:44)

⁶¹ Quoting Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Melrose has reminded of 'the historically-conditioned habitus of those of us who are writers – that "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" (78) "laid down in each [of us] by his [or her] earliest upbringing" (81), involving a particular "harmony of ethos and tastes", and particular "dispositions of those whose aspirations and world-view they express"' (Melrose 2005a).

⁶² It might be appropriate to invoke, here, Knorr Cetina's uptake of Heidegger on coping and on 'equipmental breakdown', which breakdown forces a particular sort of externalised re-engagement with performance production facilities. Here the notion of thematisation as a distanced observation of what is at stake comes into play: the discussions at this point turn on a particular question: 'do we need this to work, if the show is to work?'; 'what can we sacrifice, at this stage, without feeling that the work has escaped us?' These are typical compromises in professional production (Knorr Cetina 2001).

⁶³ This question of the hand can be traced back to Heidegger and to Derrida's reposing of that question: the hand is not limited to its physiological being. Instead, the hand is what can be identified as its metaphorical status: it touches, it holds, it gives and takes; it is a tool, as well a part of human anatomy - and in fact, were it not able to hold the tool, that tool would not be able to function. cf M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Maquarrie and E. Robinson, Blackwell MA and London, 1962.

⁶⁴ Melrose, unpublished discussion with the author, 2006.

⁶⁵ On signature, please see note 21 above.

⁶⁶ Due to family commitments, I was only able to observe a few hours of rehearsal and contribute to in a limited way to how Lee revised our writing from 2002.

⁶⁷ 'A first type of book is the root book[...] The law of the book is the law of reflection, the One that becomes two [...] Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 French original, 1999:5-7) Approaches to reflective practice might be said then to be governed by 'the law of reflection, the One that becomes two.' By contrast, the present research aims at choreographer-focused writing that is not disjunctive to the multi-modal, multi-person occasions of dance-making.

⁶⁸ Both Heidegger and Derrida have written on the gift, and here the notion is of particular interest because the real gift requires nothing of the recipient. In the present case, the gift is the ongoing work of the expert practitioner.

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Fig. 17 Photographs of Rosemary Butcher's project notebook (work-in-process 2006)

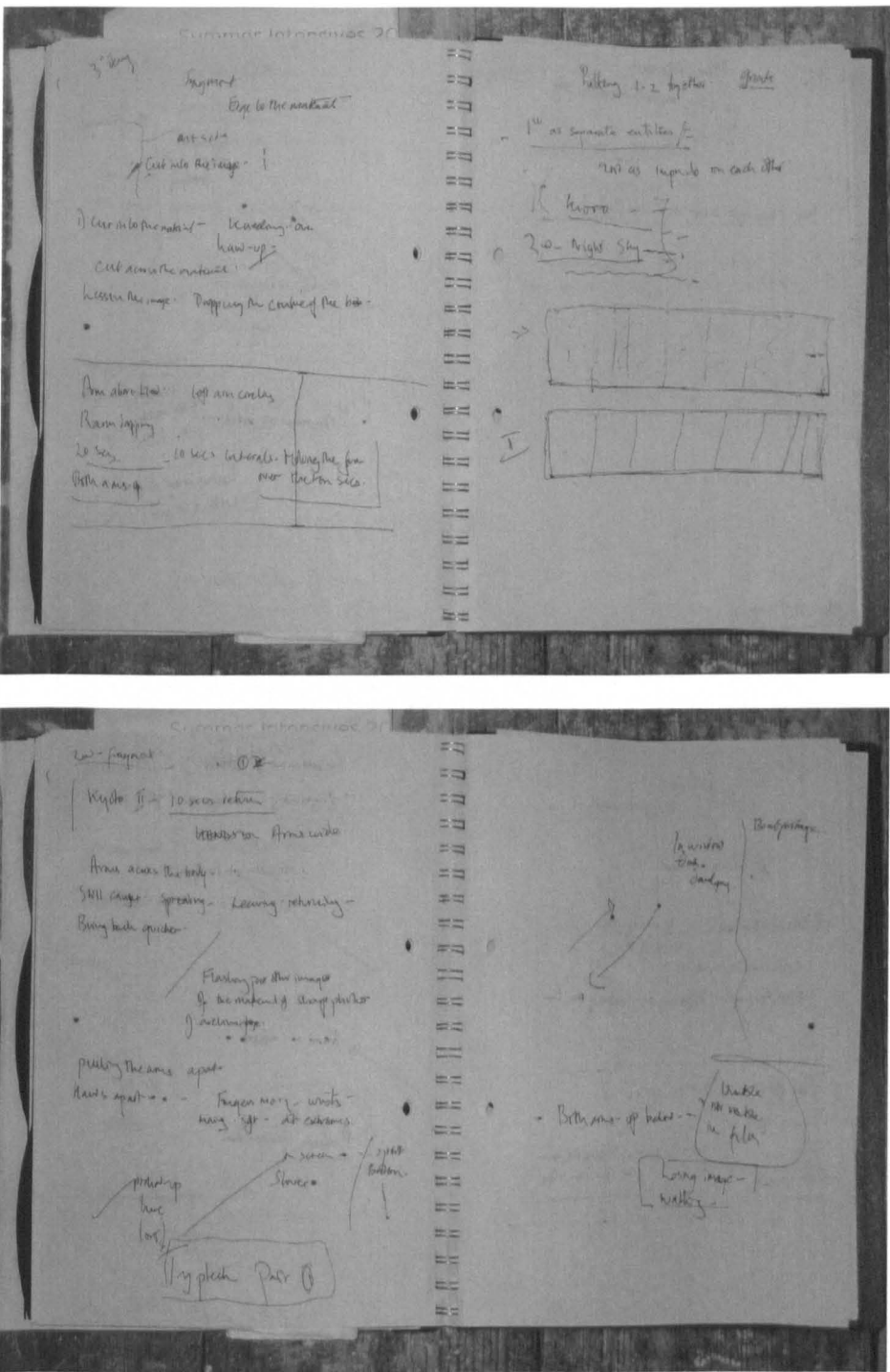


Fig. 18 Photographs of Rosemary Butcher's project notebook (work-in-process 2006)

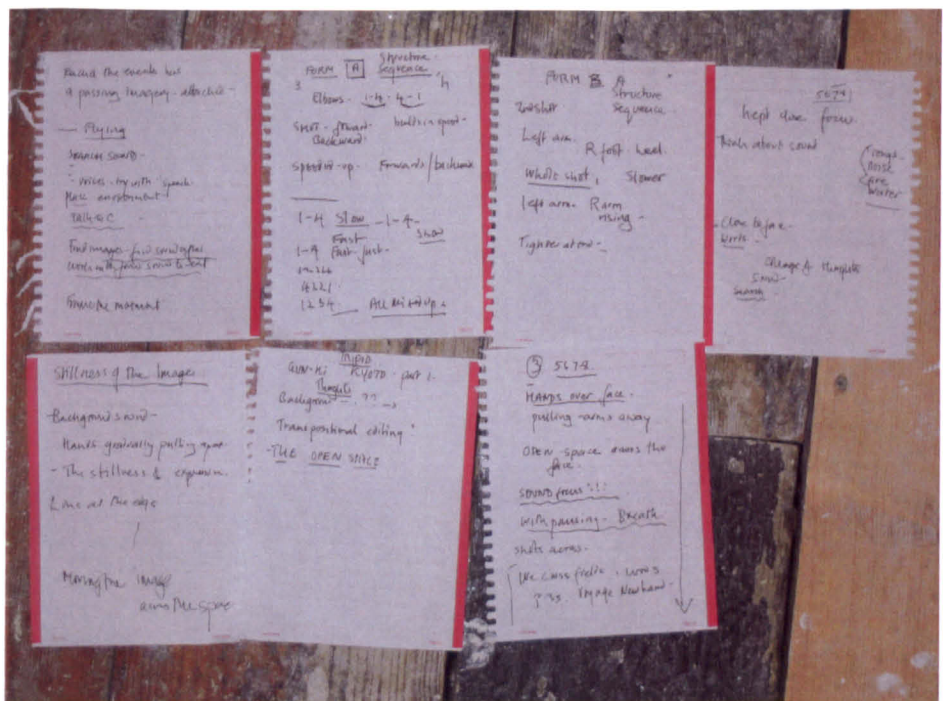
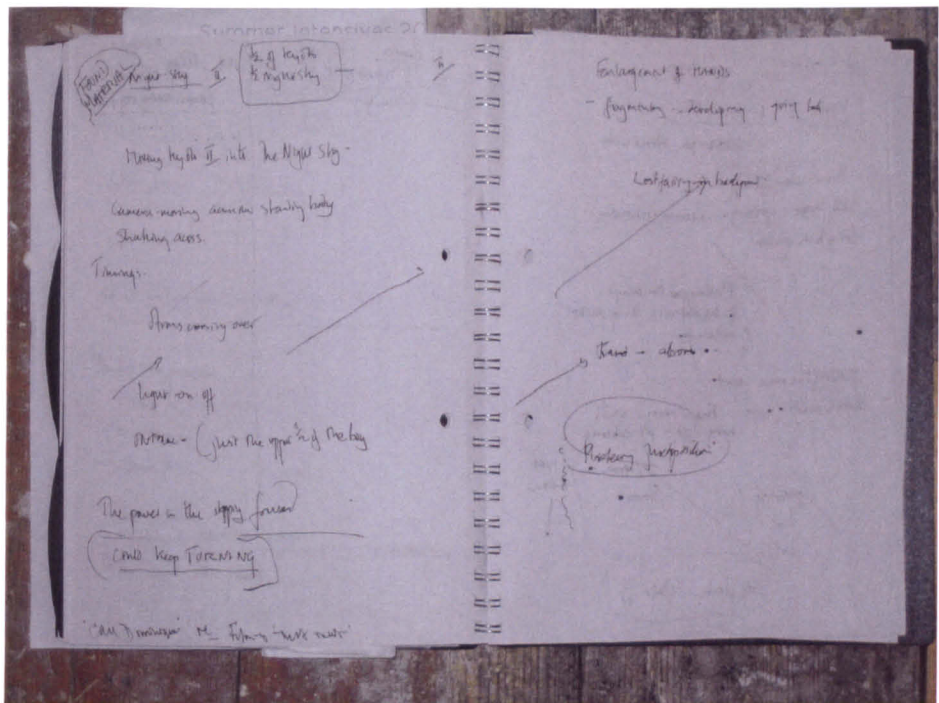


Fig. 19 Performance photographs by Vipul Sangoi of Rosemary Lee's *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2002) with dancers Henrietta Hale and Eddie Nixon

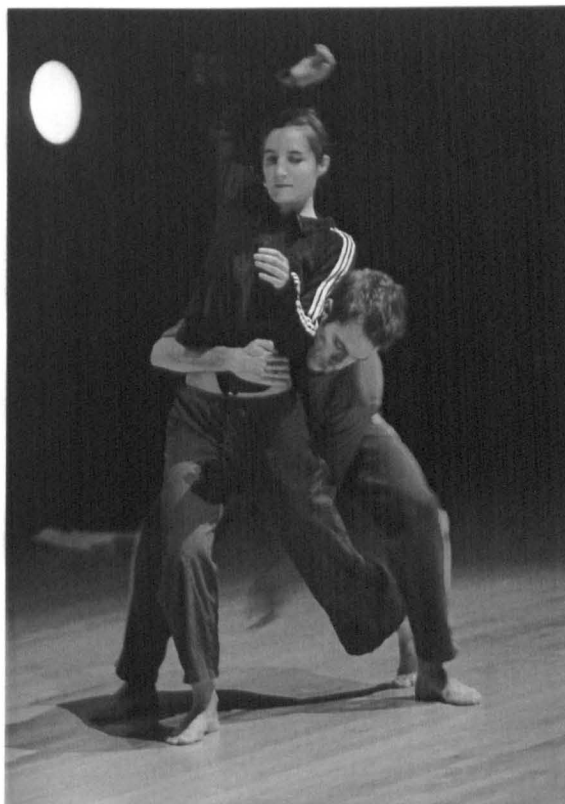


Fig. 20 Performance photographs by Vipul Sangoi of Rosemary Lee's *The Suchness of Heni and Eddie* (2002) with dancers Henrietta Hale and Eddie Nixon

